

A  
COMMENTARY  
ON THE  
HOLY SCRIPTURES:

CRITICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND HOMILETICAL,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MINISTERS AND STUDENTS

BY  
JOHN PETER LANGE, D. D.,  
ORDINARY PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY,  
IN CONNECTION WITH A NUMBER OF EMINENT EUROPEAN DIVINES.

*TRANSLATED, ENLARGED, AND EDITED*

BY  
PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D.,  
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK,  
IN CONNECTION WITH AMERICAN SCHOLARS OF VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.

VOLUME XIV. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: CONTAINING THE MINOR PROPHETS

NEW YORK:  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,  
1893.

THE

# BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.

EXPOUNDED

BY

TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D.

ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE COLLEGIATE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH  
NEW YORK.

NEW YORK:

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by  
SCRIBNER, ARMSTRONG, AND COMPANY,  
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

## PREFACE.

---

THE general form of this commentary has been determined by that of the work of which it forms a part. While conforming to this rule, the author has endeavored to consider fairly every difficult question, to furnish a tolerable conspectus of the different views upon it, and wherever possible to state his own with the reasons upon which it rests. Reference has been had to the wants of ministers and students, and it is hoped that they will be able to find in these pages at least a convenient summary of the present state of critical and exegetical opinion upon this most important of the post-exile prophets. The author has done the best that he could in the limited time allowed him, but feels painfully that he has fallen far short of his own ideal. The work, such as it is, he humbly commends to the favor of Him without whose blessing nothing is either good or useful. A respectable scholar of the early part of the last century concludes the preface to his annotations upon Zechariah with words which the present writer cheerfully adopts for himself. "*Quantum ad nos, rimati sumus hanc prophetiam, verum pro modulo nostro. Omnino enim hic usu nobis venit, quod Paulus 1 Cor. xiii. 6 inculcat: Εκ μέρους γινώσκωμεν, καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν. . . . Inter ea, si quid lucis ex opella nostra lector acceperit, Deo acceptum id referat! sin aberasse ac novos admisiss nos, animadverterit, infirmitati nostræ condonet! Ingenue namque agnoscimus in exponendo tam sublimi vaticinio egisse nos non quantum debuimus, sed quantum potuimus*" (J. H. Michaelis, 1720.)





# THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH.

## INTRODUCTION.

1. The Name and Personal Relations of Zechariah.
2. The Historical Background of his Prophecy.
3. The Style and Form of the Book.
4. The Messianic Predictions.
5. The Contents of the Book.
6. The Genuineness of the Second Part.
7. The alleged Influence of the Persian Theology.
6. Literature.

### § 1. *The Name and Personal Relations of Zechariah.*

THE name Zechariah is given to more than twenty different persons in the Old Testament (see the enumeration in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, p. 3610), but of these by far the most distinguished is the eleventh in order of the twelve minor prophets. The word זְכַרְיָה is usually regarded as a compound of the abridged divine name זָךְ and the radicals זָכַר, but opinions vary as to the proper vowelizing of the latter word. Some regard it as a masculine noun — *man of Jehovah*; others as a feminine segholate — *memory of Jehovah*; but more commonly it is taken as a verb — *Jehovah remembers*. This corresponds to the usual method in which זָךְ is compounded with other words in order to form a proper name. Some of the older expositors (Jerome, Abarhanel), and a few of the moderns (Neumann, Schlier), endeavor to trace a connection between the Prophet's name and the contents of his utterances, but such a notion is forbidden by the frequency of its occurrence elsewhere, and by the fact that there is no prophet to whose words such a name would not equally apply. He describes himself as "the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo," which phrases cannot be taken appositionally (LXX., Jerome, Cyril), but according to all genealogical usage denote that our Prophet was the son of the former and grandson of the latter. It is no objection to this view that in Ezra v. 1, vi. 14, he is called the son of Iddo, because in Scripture it is by no means unprecedented to give the name son to a grandson, or even a more remote descendant. Thus in the ninth chapter of 2 Kings, Jehu is styled in the fourteenth verse, "the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi," but in the twentieth verse, simply, "the son of Nimshi." Moreover, it is perfectly natural that the Prophet, when formally stating his own descent in the title of his prophecy, should recite the names of his father and grandfather, while the omission of the former in an historical narrative such as Ezra's, may be easily accounted for, either on the view that Berechiah had died young, or that Iddo was the more distinguished person and perhaps generally recognized as the head of the family, which appears to be a fair inference from Neh. xii. 1, 4-8. In this passage he is stated to have been one of "the heads of the priests and of their brethren," who came up from Babylon with Zerubbabel, and he is said (ver. 16) to have had a son named Zechariah, in the time of Joiakim, the successor of Joshua in the office of high priest. Hence we may conclude that Zechariah — owing possibly to the death of his father — became the immediate representative of the family after Iddo. He was, therefore, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, a Priest as well as a Prophet. As his grandfather was still in active service in the time of Joshua, Zechariah must have been quite young at that time, a fact which is indicated also by the

address made to him in one of the visions (ii. 4); "Run, speak to that young man." He was therefore born in Babylon, and came up with the first company of exiles who returned to Palestine. This fact of itself disposes of the fables of Epiphanius and others that he was a man of advanced age at the time of the return, and had distinguished himself by various wonders and prophecies in Babylon (see the citations in Köhler, *Engl.*). Similar priestly traditions as to his death and his burial by the side of Haggai, near Jerusalem, have no historical value. The later Jewish accounts that he was a member of the Great Synagogue and took an active part in providing for the liturgical service of the Second Temple, are probable enough in themselves, but cannot be certainly authenticated. The LXX. ascribe to him the composition of Ps. cxxxvii., cxxxviii., and to him and Haggai, that of Ps. cxlv.-cxlviii., in some of which ascriptions the Peshito and the Vulgate agree. There seems to be no means at the present day of determining how far any of these are to be credited. "The triumphant *Hallelujah* with which many of these Psalms open, was supposed to be characteristic of those which were first chanted in the Second Temple, and came with an emphasis of meaning from the lips of those who had been restored to their native land. The allusions, moreover, with which these Psalms abound, as well as their place in the Psalter, leave us in no doubt as to the time when they were composed, and lend confirmation to the tradition respecting their authorship" (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, p. 3599).

## § 2. The Historical Background of his Prophecy.

This is plainly determined by the book itself. Zechariah's first address, one which is on its face introductory, is dated in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, which is two months after the first prophecy of Haggai (i. 1). The two prophets, therefore, were for a time contemporary, and acted in concert in the commencement of their labors so far as concerned their first object, namely, the rebuilding of the Temple. In this Haggai led the way, and then left the work to the younger man, who, however, by no means confined his prophetic activity to this narrow scope.

The restoration of the Temple had been a matter of great and pressing interest to the company of 50,000 who came up from Babylon under the summons of Cyrus in the year 536 B. C., and reoccupied the land of their fathers. They at once began to collect materials and workmen, and in the second month of the following year laid the foundation of the house with mingled joy and grief (Ezra iii. 11-13). But they were not suffered to proceed in quiet. Their neighbors, the descendants of the people whom Esar-haddon had settled in Samaria, asked permission to join in the enterprise, but were indignantly rejected. In consequence they exerted themselves in opposition, both by throwing obstacles in the way on the spot and by hiring influential counsellors at the Persian court. They were successful even during the life of Cyrus (Ezra iv. 5), but in the reign of Gomates, the pseudo-Smerdis, obtained a decree absolutely prohibiting the further prosecution of the work. In consequence the whole enterprise lay in abeyance for a period of nearly fourteen years. But in the year 521 B. C., Darius, the son of Hystaspes, ascended the throne. Immediately the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, inferring that the prohibitory decree of the preceding king ceased at his death, incited their countrymen to resume the work. They did so under the lead of Zerubbabel and Joshua, but were again interrupted, not however by their malignant neighbors, but by Tatnai, the Persian governor west of the Euphrates, who simply as a matter of administration inquired into the origin and object of the movement. The consequence was a written reference to the central government at Babylon. A search in the records at Ecbatana brought to light the original decree of Cyrus ordering the restoration of the Jews and their worship. This, Darius cordially renewed and confirmed in the second year of his reign, so that thenceforth there was no longer any outward difficulty in the way.

But it is very evident from the language of Haggai that a great change had occurred in the views and feelings of the people. Their former zeal for divine worship had almost disappeared. They became engrossed in the work of repairing their private fortunes and securing the comforts of life. They accepted the hindrances in the way of work upon the Temple as providential indications that they were not to resume it, and very energetic appeals and remonstrances were required to rouse them from their apathy, and engage them with becoming diligence and constancy in the enterprise. These efforts of the two prophets were successful, and the building was finished in the sixth year of Darius (B. C. 515), twenty

one years after its commencement. All the notes of time given in Zechariah (i. 1-7; vii. 1) fall within the period occupied in labor upon the Temple, but it does not seem to follow as a necessary consequence that all his earlier prophecies are to be understood as mainly intended to secure this consummation. The Temple was to the Jews both an indispensable means of worship and the one great symbol of their faith; and indifference to its existence or progress was a sure token of spiritual declension. The Prophet therefore has a constant reference, direct or indirect, to this work, but he by no means confines himself to it. His utterances take in the whole character and condition of the covenant people, their present dangers and discouragements, their tendency to formalism and self-deception, their relations to the surrounding heathen and their influence upon the future prospects of the world. His historical position in the second-fourth years of Darius merely furnishes the background for the delineations he presents of the present and coming fortunes of the kingdom of God. To insist, as some recent writers do, upon limiting the scope of the night visions to the Prophet's own age, greatly embarrasses the interpretation, and at the same time disregards what is one of the characteristic features of all Scripture prophecy, namely, that it constantly brings together the near and the remote, deals in generic statements, and prefers a logical to a chronological connection. The sacred writers of course met the wants of their contemporaries; but the Spirit that was in them gave their words a force and bearing which passed far beyond the immediate present.

### § 3. The Style and Form of the Book.

From the earliest period complaint has been made of the obscurity of the Prophet. Hengstenberg quotes from Abarbanel, "The prophecies of Zechariah are so obscure that no expositors however skilled have found their hands (Ps. lxxvi. 5) in the explanation," and from Jarchi, "the prophecy is very obscure, for it contains visions resembling dreams which was interpreted; and we shall never be able to discover the true interpretation until the teacher of righteousness (cf. Joel ii. 23 marg.) arrives." The same thing had been said long before these Jewish expositors by Jerome, who after pronouncing the first part very obscure, begins his comment on the second with these words, "*Ab obscuris ad-obscuriora transimus, et cum Moyse ingredimur in nubem et caliginem. Abyssus abyssum invocat in voce catarractorum Dei, et gyrans gyrando radit spiritus et in circulos suos revertitur: Labyrinthos patimur errores et Christi cæca regionis filo vestigia.*" So Lowth speaks of him as the Prophet "who of all is perhaps the most obscure." To the same effect speak many of the rationalistic expositors. And although some of these complaints may be traced to subjective causes as, e. g., the extreme difficulty a Jew would find in understanding any writing which apparently describes a suffering Messiah, or the unwillingness of one who denies the possibility of prophecy in the strict sense of the word, to see or admit what manifestly is a prediction of a remotely future event; yet it is undeniable that there are passages which in themselves are hard to be understood. This is owing mainly to the predominance of symbolical and figurative language, and occasionally to the brevity and conciseness of the statements. Yet, as Vitringa observes, this fact ought not to frighten any one who is eager for the truth, since there is a sense, even if hidden, which relates to the most important things; and this should only stimulate one's endeavors. Moreover, as Hengstenberg suggests, there are two considerations which greatly aid the interpreter of Zechariah. One is that he leans so much upon his predecessors prior to the Captivity, and hence much light is gained from parallel passages. The other lies in his being a Prophet of the restoration. Of course one element of uncertainty which is found in the earlier Prophets here ceases. A good deal of what was future to them is to Zechariah either past or present, and it is not possible to explain any of his glowing delineations of a future state of deliverance and enlargement as fulfilled in the return from Babylon. The contraction of the possible field of vision lessens the liability to err.

Zechariah delivers his oracles partly in direct prophetic speech, partly in the relation of visions, and partly in the description of symbolical acts (chaps. vi., xi.). The occurrence of the two latter forms has been attributed to his Chaldean education, and to the influence of Babylonian usages and doctrines upon his mind. This is far-fetched and needless. Every peculiarity may be sufficiently accounted for by reference to the older Prophets with whom he was familiar, especially Jeremiah and Daniel. The occurrence of symbolical visions cannot be due to the influence of the exile, for such visions are found in Amos (vii.-ix.) who

lived long before that period, and are not found in Haggai, who was Zechariah's contemporary. In respect to our Prophet's doctrine of angels, good or bad, equally groundless is the view which makes him a debtor to Mesopotamian or Persian theology. As this point will be found treated at some length in a subsequent section (§ 7), only a few words need be added here. As to good angels in general, and the angel of the Lord in particular, the Book of Genesis furnished him with accepted models; and as to Satan, his existence is found clearly set forth in the Book of Job, which no sober interpreter has ever assigned to a later date than the Solomonic era. Zechariah, therefore, reveals no "Babylonian-Persian coloring" in his writings. The particulars which have been cited as showing such a coloring are either distinctively Israelitish (*e. g.*, the number seven, iii. 9), or else manifestly general (*e. g.*, the company of riders, i. 8). On the contrary there is every indication that his culture was native and national. Not only does he expressly refer to the former Prophets (i. 4-6; vii. 7-12) but borrows their phraseology, as in *Be silent off flesh*, etc., ii. 13, cf. Hab. ii. 20; *a brand plucked*, etc., iii. 2, cf. Amos iv. 11; *quiet my spirit*, vi. 8, cf. Ez. v. 13; *חֲלָקָה וְיִשְׁעָה*, vii. 14, ix. 8, cf. Ez. xxxv. 7; *fear not*, etc., viii. 13, cf. Zeph. iii. 16; *let us go speedily*, etc., viii. 21, cf. Is. ii. 3; *shall take hold*, etc., viii. 23, cf. Is. iv. 1. Other references may be seen by comparing i. 12 with Jer. xxv. 11, 12; ii. 8 with Is. xlix. 20; iii. 3 and vi. 12 with Is. liii. 2 and xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15, iii. 10 with Micah iv. 4; vi. 13 with Ps. cx. 4; viii. 4 with Is. lxxv. 19, 20; viii. 19 with Jer. xxxi. 13; xii. 1 with Is. xlii. 5; li. 13.

Henderson speaks of his prose as "diffuse, uniform, and repetitious," which is far too sweeping a charge. If by it he refers to the reiteration of "Ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me" in ch. ii., or of "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts" in ch. viii., it may be said that if one considers what an impression is thus made as to the Prophet's consciousness of his inspiration and the certainty of the declarations he utters, these will not be deemed "vain repetitions." I agree with Pressel that he must have no eyes who does not see and admire the grandeur of the night visions, and no ears who does not hear the heavy tread of the last six chapters. Manifest as is the dependence of Zechariah upon his predecessors in the particulars before mentioned, he yet has a marked individuality both in thought and expression, *e. g.*, God's protection of Jerusalem as a wall of fire round about and glory within (ii. 5); the dramatic scene of Joshua and Satan before the angel of the Lord (iii. 1, 2); the poetic delineation of the resistless Spirit (iv. 7); the development of the idea in the word Branch (iii. 8; vi. 12); the exquisite picture of peace and prosperity (viii. 4, 5); the representation of Judah as a bow which the Lord bends and Ephraim the arrow fitted on the string (ix. 13); the energy in describing the wretchedness of the flock of slaughter in xi. 5; the striking comparisons in xii. 8-10; the amazing conception in the phrase "fellow of Jehovah" (xiii. 7); or, the picturesque method of setting forth universal holiness in xiv. 20, 21.

The Hebrew of Zechariah is now admitted to be pure and remarkably free from Chaldaisms. There are some orthographic peculiarities, such as *יָרִיב* for *יָרִיב* (xii. 7, 8, 10). Some singular uses of words, as *אֶת־הָאֵל* for the indefinite article (v. 7), and some unusual constructions, as *וְיִשְׁעָה בְּתִיבָה*, or the unusual position of *אֶת* in vii. 7, viii. 17, cf. Haggai ii. 5; but in the main the language corresponds to that of the earlier models, and exhibits far fewer traces of linguistic decay than we should expect.

#### § 4. The Messianic Predictions.

It is an old remark that Zechariah is distinguished for his insight into the moral and spiritual meaning of the Mosaic economy, and his illustration of the Apostle's statement that the law is a schoolmaster unto Christ. A great largeness and clearness of view is apparent even on a cursory inspection of his writings. His rebuke of formal fasting in ch. vii. is not nearly so eloquent as Isaiah's treatment of the same theme in the fifty-eighth chapter of his prophecies, but it is every way as decided and vigorous. The universality of the coming dispensation is suggested again and again. It is not individuals merely, but many nations and far-off peoples who are to be joined unto the Lord. The old boundaries of the covenant people are to be enlarged until they become coextensive with the limits of the habitable earth. See ii. 11; vi. 15; viii. 20-23; ix. 10; xiv. 9-16. The sacred inscription upon the tiara of the high priest, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, which proclaimed his contri-



consecration to the sacerdotal function, Zechariah sees engraved hereafter even upon the bells of the horses in token of the fact that all believers are to become a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and that, to such a degree that even the most ordinary functions of life shall be discharged in a religious spirit. (See xiv. 20.) Again, the reconstruction of the material Temple upon its old site is so far from satisfying his enlarged views that he passes at once to the true house of God, the Temple not made with hands, the glorious structure composed of living stones, built and inhabited by the Spirit of the living God. (See vi. 13; iv. 6.) The golden candelabrum of the Tabernacle is to him not a mere ornament however brilliant, but the resplendent type of the city of God, precious to Jehovah as the apple of his eye, and shining from afar like a city set upon a hill, the means of its illumination being provided from ever fresh and imperishable sources. (See iv. 1-12.) Himself a member of the priestly order, he looks forward to the time when the patriarchal type of Melchisedek shall be realized in the combination of regal and sacerdotal functions in one person. Not even the evangelical Prophet presents this instructive and consolatory thought with the clearness and emphasis of Zechariah. (See iv. 13, 14; vi. 13.) Yet again, the union of the highest doctrines of grace with the most stringent ethical claims is given in a manner worthy of Paul. Over and over is it asserted that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem (i. 17; ii. 12; iii. 2), a fact which is made the sole ground of her preservation, enlargement, and defense against all foes, visible and invisible; and yet he who asserts this sees between heaven and earth the flying roll inscribed with curses against all transgressors (v. 2-4), and also lays down with sharp precision the immutable laws of justice, goodness, and truth, founded upon the recognition of man's relations to his fellow-man, and their common relation to the one Maker and Father of all (vii. 8-10; viii. 16, 17). Once more, the fine conception of a joint observance of the Feast of Tabernacles by all families of the earth, represents the final issue of the world's great pilgrimage, when the race of man, having concluded its march through the wilderness of error and trial, shall gratefully record the divine goodness in the new Exodus, and keep a perpetual memorial of this distinguishing mercy (xiv. 16).

But besides these general allusions and references to the coming dispensation, there are specific and unquestionable predictions of the one great person through whom they were to be accomplished. These are given not in a continuous succession, but, just as they were by the former Prophets, at different times, and in various relations according to the circumstances and object of the Prophet on any particular occasion. Each prediction answered a definite purpose when it was uttered, and the whole together serve admirably to supplement and complete the Messianic literature of the preëxile period. These specific references are more frequent and emphatic than in any of Zechariah's predecessors except Isaiah. They are six in number.

1. The first one occurs in ch. iii. 8, where Zechariah appropriates a name already used by Isaiah (iv. 2) and by Jeremiah (xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15) for the same purpose — **BRANCH**. Jehovah declares that he will bring forth his servant, thus entitled, and, in close connection with this promise, asserts that the iniquity of the land will be removed in one day.

2. In ch. vi. 12, 13, the same promise is resumed and enlarged. The man whose name is **BRANCH**. He will start from a lowly origin and build the Temple of Jehovah, not the mere material structure, but the true spiritual Temple composed of living stones. Not only will He sit in majesty upon a throne, but be a priest upon his throne, uniting in Himself the two distinct offices and so securing the perfect discharge of the functions of both.

3. In ch. ix. 9, 10, the King reappears. His dominion is peaceful but universal, and shouts of triumph hail his coming. Yet that coming is marked by signs of lowliness and sorrow. The passage presents the same combination so often found in Isaiah, of the absence of external signs of majesty with the reality of a world-wide power and influence.

4. The next Messianic reference is found in the obscure and difficult eleventh chapter, where (vers. 12, 13) the wages of the good shepherd are estimated at the contemptuous sum of thirty pieces of silver. "A goodly price," says Jehovah, with certainly not unbecoming irony, "at which I was prized of them." The New Testament (Matt. xxvii. 9, 10) leaves no doubt that here is a designed allusion to the price of the fearful treason of Judas and the subsequent disposal of the wages of unrighteousness.

5. In ch. xii. 10 is a still more remarkable delineation of the suffering Messiah, and a vivid statement of the connection between his death and the kindling of an earnest and genuine repentance in those who look upon Him as one whom they have pierced. It was fulfilled at Pentecost, and has been illustrated in the effects of the preaching of the cross

ever since. The repentance thus wrought is not ineffectual, but results in forgiveness and holiness, as is shown in xiii. 1, which is the conclusion of the passage commencing at the tenth verse of the previous chapter.

6. The last distinct reference to the coming Saviour (xiii. 7), is perhaps the most striking in the entire range of prophecy. In it Jehovah is represented as calling upon the sword to awake against the man who is his fellow, where we are confronted with the two mysteries; that one sustaining such a relation should be subjected to such a doom, and that the Being who calls for and causes it, is Jehovah with whom he is so intimately united. The only explanation lies in the historical statement of the Evangelist, — God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:

Thus is apparent the gradual progress of the disclosure. First, Jehovah's lowly servant, Branch; then that servant, as priest and king building Jehovah's Temple; thirdly, as a meek and peaceful, but universal monarch; fourthly, a Shepherd, scorned, rejected, betrayed, and (by implication) slain; fifthly, his pierced form seen by faith a means of deep and general repentance attended by pardon, and conversion; and lastly, the Fellow of Jehovah admitted by Jehovah himself, at once the redeemer and the pattern of his flock.

Dr. Lange (*Genesis*, p. 40) finds in ch. x. 11 a representation of Christ as going before his returning people through the sea of sorrow, beating down the waves of the sea. But this is gained only by an arbitrary interpretation, at war with the connection, unsupported by usage and scarcely admissible even upon the theory of accommodation.

### § 5. *The Contents of the Book.*

It is very obvious on even a cursory inspection, that the book consists of two parts, the former of which (chaps. i.-viii.) contains mention of the dates at which its various portions were communicated, while the latter (chaps. ix.-xiv.) contains no dates at all. There are other and even more important points of difference, as will presently be seen, but this one is enough to indicate the occurrence of a break in the stream of prophetic utterance; the first part having been set forth in the earlier years of Zechariah's activity, even before the completion of the Temple; the latter on the contrary having been delayed for several, possibly many years, as there is no internal indication in either its structure or its substance, that it was called forth by any particular juncture of circumstances in the condition of the people. The analogy of the Book of Isaiah suggests the opinion that the Prophet, having in the former part of his book communicated the revelations which bore immediately upon the duties and interest of his countrymen at the time, in the latter took a wider range, and set forth the future destiny of the Church in its lights and shades, in such a form as to be of equal benefit at all times and to all classes.

### THE FIRST PART.

This is determined by the several dates to consist of three distinct prophetic utterances.

I. Chap. i. 1-6. These verses contain an introduction in the form of a solemn admonition enforced by an appeal to the experience of the fathers, who not only felt but acknowledged that Jehovah's threatenings were not a vain thing but a formidable reality. The date is the eighth month of the second year of Darius, *n. c.* 515.

II. Chaps. i. 7-vi. 15. Eight Night-visions followed by an Appendix, namely:

1. The Man among the Myrtles, or Successful Intercession for the Covenant people (ch. i. 7-17).
2. The Four Horns and Four Smiths, or an Adequate Defender against every Assailant (ch. i. 18-21).
3. The Man with the Measuring Line, or the Enlargement and Security of the People of God (ch. ii.).
4. Joshua the High Priest before the Angel of Jehovah, or the Forgiveness of Sin and the Coming of the Branch (ch. iii.).
5. The Candlestick with the two Olive Trees, or the Positive Communication of God's Spirit and Grace (ch. iv.).
6. The Flying Roll, or the Destroying Curse upon all Sinners (ch. v. 1-4).
7. The Woman in the Ephah, or the Permanent Exile of the Wicked (ch. v. 5-11).

## 8. The Four Chariots, or Jehovah's Judgments upon the Heathen (ch. vi. 1-8).

Appendix. This recites a symbolical action, the Crowning of Joshua, the High-priest, or the Functions of the Priest-King whose name is HIRANCH. The date of the whole series is the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month of the second year of Darius, n. c. 515.

III. Chaps. vii. and viii. An answer to the inquiry of the People whether they should continue to observe the annual fasts which commemorated special calamities in their former experience. The Prophet first (ch. vii.) rebukes their formalism and recounts the sins and sorrows of their fathers; and then (ch. viii.) promises such blessings as will change their fasts into festivals and attract even the heathen to seek their fellowship. The prophecy was uttered in the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius, n. c. 517, which is the last date mentioned in the book.

## THE SECOND PART.

This, as has been said, bears no date, and may have been, and probably was, delivered long after what is contained in the preceding chapters. It is divided into two oracles by the titles which head respectively chaps. ix. and xii. The general theme is the Future Destiny of the Covenant People.

## I. The First Burden (chaps. ix.-xi.).

This seems to outline the course of God's providence toward his people as far as the time of our Saviour.

1. Judgment upon the Land of Hadrach (ix. 1-8), or the Syrian Conquests of Alexander the Great.

2. Zion's King of Peace (ix. 9, 10). Plainly Messianic.

3. Victory over the Sons of Javan (ix. 11-17), or the triumphs of the Maccabees.

4. Further Blessings of the Covenant People (ch. x.). Their gradual increase in means and numbers under native rulers.

5. The Rejection of the Good Shepherd (ch. xi.). A striking delineation of our Lord's treatment by his own people.

## II. The Second Burden (chaps. xii.-xiv.).

This carries forward the outlook upon the future even to the time of the end.

1. Israel's Victory over Trials (xii. 1-9), or the Triumph of the early Church over persecuting Foes.

2. Repentance and Conversion (xii. 10; xiii. 1), or the Power of Christ's Death to awaken and renew.

3. The Fruits of Penitence (xiii. 2-6), as shown in the abolition of false worship and false prophecy which stand for all forms of sin.

4. The Sword against the Shepherd and his Flock (xiii. 7-9), or Christ is smitten by his Father, and his People suffer also.

5. Final Conflict and Triumph of God's Kingdom (ch. xiv.), or a General Survey of the checkered course from beginning to end.

## § 6. The Genuineness of the Second Part.

This is in some respects the most interesting and important question pertaining to the book, and needs to be considered at some length.

1. *The History of the Assault.* This is comparatively of late date. The question seems never to have been stirred until the middle of the seventeenth century. The first to raise a doubt was the learned and pious Jos. Mede in the *Fragmenta Sacra* appended to his *Disser. Eccles. Trigra*, London, 1655. This was suggested to him by the citation in Matt. (xxvii. 9, 10), which the Evangelist attributes to Jeremiah, whence he concluded that "the Jews had not rightly attributed these chapters to Zechariah;" and he was further confirmed in this opinion by the contents of the chapters, some of which he thought required an earlier date than the exile, and others were not suitable to Zechariah's position and object. Mede was followed in this view by Hammond, 1681; Rich. Kidder, *Demon. of the Messiah*, 1700; Whitson, 1722; Archbishop Newcome, *Imp. Version*, etc., 1785; to all of whom Blayney made what Hengstenberg calls "an admirable reply," in his work on *Zechariah*, Oxford, 1797. The controversy was first awakened in Germany by B. G. Flügge, in an anonymous work published in 1784, in which he maintained that the second part consisted of nine dis-



distinct prophecies, delivered before the exile. After him Eichhorn, Corrodi, Paulus, and Vatke went to the opposite extreme and assigned its origin to a writer living in the time of Alexander the Great. The greater part of the hostile critics (Bertholdt, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Hitzig, Knobel, Maurer, Ewald, Bleek, Bunsen, Von Ortenberg, Pressel) followed in the wake of Mede and Newcome, and maintained, with however many variations among themselves, that the six chapters in question dated from a period prior to the Captivity. Some (Davidson and Pressel) deem the whole the work of one author, probably the Zechariah mentioned Is. viii. 2, who lived in the reign of Ahaz. Others (Knobel, Bunsen, *et al.*) assign chaps. xii.-xiv. (to which Ewald excepts xiii. 7-9, which he thinks misplaced where it is) to a later unknown author, probably a contemporary of Jeremiah; and thus they make two ante-exile composers of the second part. The traditional view of one book and one author has been maintained by Carpzov, Beckhaus, Jahn, Koster, Hengstenberg, De Wette, (in the later editions of his *Einführung*), Umbreit, Hävernick, Keil, Stahelin, V. Hoffman, Neumann, Kliefoth, Köhler, Reinke, *et al.*; and in England by Henderson, Wordsworth, and Pusey, while Jon. Pye Smith and Davidson hold to the pre-exile authorship.

2. *The Grounds of Objection to the Genuineness.* These have been already suggested. (a.) The first and most important is the New Testament authority as apparently given by Matthew (xxvii. 9, 10), where the Evangelist attributes to Jeremiah what is unquestionably a citation from Zech. xi. 12. Various readings are found in some MSS. and VSS., but these are such as in all probability sprang from a desire to make the Gospel conform to the fact. (b.) Another ground is sought in the contents of the six chapters, *e. g.* Mede argues that one of the chapters contains a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem which was fulfilled by Titus, and this was by no means suitable to the object of Zechariah, whose mission was only to console and to encourage. Again, Ephraim and Judah are spoken of together as if both were still existing as distinct kingdoms, which they never were after the exile. Assyria and Egypt are mentioned as formidable powers which at that time they were not, Persia having absorbed the former and subdued the latter. So also are Phoenicia, Damascus, and Philistia represented as important foes, when their power had long been broken. Complaints are made of false prophets and idolatry, of neither of which is any trace found after the Captivity. The delineation of the Messiah in the second part, as rejected and put to death, is inconsistent with those statements in the first, which represent Him as glorious and blessed. (c.) A third objection is drawn from the alleged contrast of style between the parts. The first is prosaic and poor, the second is poetic and forcible, so that the difference is manifest. The one is full of visions, and speaks much of angels and also of Satan, of all of which there is scarcely a trace in the other. Certain characteristic phrases, "The word of Jehovah came," "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts," etc., found in the first eight chapters, do not occur at all in the last six, while on the other hand "in that day" occurs frequently in the latter, but not once in the former. A convenient summary of these objections may be found in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, pp. 3603, 3609.

3. *The Argument for the Traditional View.* (a.) Here it may be remarked, first that the opinion which refers the origin of the controverted chapters to the time of Alexander or of the Maccabees, is now generally abandoned, and by the later writers on the other side is not deemed worthy of reply. Indeed it never rested upon anything but the dogmatic prejudice that the Prophets could prophecy only of that which lay in their own time, and could be foreknown by their own unaided faculties. Eichhorn frankly confessed that all other arguments were unsatisfactory. (b.) The degree of variation among the objectors themselves, casts suspicion upon their views. Men of equal learning, insight, and candor, differ alike upon the authorship they suggest and the grounds upon which they defend it. Some make one writer, others make two; one rests mainly upon the text in Matthew, another is guided by the variations in matter and tone between the first part and the second, another makes much of the variations in style. It seems then that as soon as we leave the traditional view we are all at sea, with no certain criteria of judgment, and liable to be borne hither and thither by mere subjective influences. (c.) We have no record of any other Zechariah who might be presumed to have written what was afterwards confounded with the genuine writings of the son of Iddo. Mention is made (Is. viii. 2) of a man bearing this name, but it is only as a "faithful witness," without the least indication that he bore the prophetic character or discharged the prophetic office; and later, another is spoken of (2 Chron. xvi. 1) who was a trusted counsellor of King Uzziah, but this man, even if the text be correct (of which there is serious doubt), while he "understood the sight of God," yet did not stand

in the prophetic order and is not credited with any prophetic utterances, much less writings, for popular edification. Nothing then but a vigorous exercise of the imagination can produce another Zechariah whose compositions might by mistake have been appended to those of the post-exilium Prophet. (d.) The theory of another author or authors implies that there was a mistake made by the framers of the present Canon of the Old Testament. It is quite certain that they intended all the fourteen chapters of Zechariah to be regarded as the work of one and the same person. Did they err? We may admit, as Pressel claims, the paucity of our knowledge as to the time of the compilation of the Canon, and the men by whom it was done; nor can we urge with Hengstenberg that Zechariah lived in the same age with the collectors of the Canon, which may or may not have been the case. But it is certain that the Canon was completed before the version of the Septuagint was made, i. e., in the first half of the third century before Christ, and its compilers had abundant opportunity to satisfy themselves as to the claims of the different classes of writings upon which they adjudicated. Some they admitted; others they rejected; and their judgment stands to-day accredited by the highest authority, — that of our Lord and his Apostles. We know from Josephus and other sources what Scriptures they were upon which the blessed Saviour placed his imprimatur. They included the *Δωδεκάπρόφητον*, just as it stands, and in this, the Book of Zechariah just as it stands. Would he have sanctioned such an error as is claimed to exist? Is it reasonable to think that the Providence which confessedly watched so carefully over the sacred writings in all other respects would have failed just here? The cases which Mede cites are not parallel. He speaks of Agur's prayer being included in the Book of Proverbs of Solomon, and of liturgical compositions by other authors being included in what are called the Psalms of David. But in both these cases the rule was applied, *a fortiori nomen fit*; and besides, the added portions were for the most part marked with the names of their respective authors. In Zechariah nothing of the kind is seen. Not a hint of divided authorship is given, nor was even the thought of such a thing suggested, until twenty centuries had rolled away. Nor is there a single ascertained instance in the older portions of the Scriptures, in which pieces by different authors are collected into one book and ascribed to one and the same author.

(e.) As to the passage in Matthew's gospel, it may be truly said that the Evangelist would hardly be likely to make a correction of the Jewish Canon in this indirect manner, without giving some intimation to that effect. "The uniform reference of these chapters to Zechariah in the Jewish Canon is much more difficult to account for if he did not write there, than the verse in Matthew is, if he did" (T. V. Moore). Moreover, Matthew's statement gives no countenance to those who claim an early Zechariah, for he explicitly mentions Jeremiah, and they who plead his authority must take it as it stands, and not bend it to suit their own purposes. So far then as the present argument is concerned, we might dismiss this citation as having no bearing upon the question of an earlier or later Zechariah. For a full statement of the question the reader is referred to Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, 3609, and to Lango's *Comm. on Matthew*, l. c. In my own view, the citation is not to be explained as an error of memory, which is inconsistent with the true doctrine of the inspiration of the sacred penmen; nor as a textual error, for the existing text is completely established; nor as a quotation from a lost book of Jeremiah (Origen), or an apocryphal book of his (Jerome, Eichhorn), or one of his oral statements (Calovius), or from a genuine work of Jeremiah from which the Jews have expunged this passage (Eusebius), since all of these suppositions are as destitute of probability as they are of proof; nor by the theory that the Evangelist, fusing two passages together, one from Jeremiah and another from Zechariah, names the joint product from the older Prophet (Grotius, Hengstenberg), for this is extremely artificial and unlikely; nor by the claim that the name Jeremiah was purposely substituted for that of Zechariah in order to teach us that all prophecies proceed from one Spirit, and that the Prophets are merely channels, not sources, of the Divine truth (Wordsworth), for this would create far greater difficulties than it removes, by undermining all confidence in any specific quotations. The only remaining view is that of Scrivener and Lightfoot, that the Book of Jeremiah, being actually arranged by the Jews as the first of all the Prophets (Bava Bathra), gave its name to the whole body of their writings, and that thus Matthew was justified in naming his quotation as he did. If this be not acceptable, all we can do is to assume an error on the part of one of the earliest transcribers, or to say with Calvin, *Me nescire fuleor nec auxilii laboro*. But however this citation may be explained, or even if it be given up as inexplicable, it cannot be used to prove that the authorship of the second part

of Zechariah was an open question in the time of the Apostles. For if that had been the case we should have had some other evidence of the fact. Especially, since Matthew makes two other quotations from Zechariah (xli. 5 and xvi. 31), but in both cases follows his usual method of quoting without name; in one, saying, "which was spoken by the Prophet," in the other, simply "it is written." But if he had really held that the second part of Zechariah, although inspired and canonical, was not attributed to its true author, would he not have said so in these passages as well as in xxvii. 9?

(f.) As to the contents of the chapters in question the objections spring from a misapprehension of their exegetical meaning. Many of these will be considered as they arise in the course of the exposition, but a few remarks may be made here. The mention of Ephraim by no means presupposes the distinct existence of the northern kingdom. That name is used to designate a part of the existing population just as the corresponding term Israel is employed by Malachi (ii. 11), whom no one denies to be a post-exile Prophet. Assyria and Egypt in like manner are brought forward as natural and convenient representatives of the heathen foes of the covenant people. Phœnicia and the other kingdoms on the coast line of Palestine, although not flourishing and independent, were certainly in existence in Zechariah's time, and suffered under the victorious march of Alexander which our Prophet predicts. The difficulty about the reference to false Prophets and idolatry is diluted by the prophetic peculiarity of representing the future under the forms of the past. As to the Messianic predictions in the second part, they are a pledge of its genuineness, sustaining as they do the same relation to the Messianic allusions in the first part, as Isaiah's later predictions on the same theme (xlix., liii.) do to his earlier writings (ii., ix., xi.). When Zechariah's main object was to encourage the people in carrying forward the Temple, he naturally gave special prominence to the brighter side of the Messianic picture; but afterwards when his scope was larger, he brought in the more developed thought of one who triumphs through suffering. (g.) In xii. 11 there is an undeniable allusion to the death of Josiah in the valley of Megiddo, which is fatal to the assumption that the second part was composed in the time of Ahaz. Nor can this be successfully eluded by assigning chaps. ix.-xi. to one author, and chaps. xii.-xiv. to another, for the two "burdens" are intimately connected by their common description of the people as a flock, and of their leaders as shepherds, and by the dependence of xiii. 7 upon xi. 11. But if the six chapters form one whole, how could they have been uttered in the days of Jeremiah and yet have attained no recognition at his hand?

(h.) As to the alleged differences of style, Pressel, himself an opponent of the genuineness, says with some sharpness that the man who professes to see such a contrast that he can say of one part that it is post-exile Hebrew, and of the other that it is ante-exile Hebrew, must have an ear fine enough to hear the grass when it grows! Still it must be admitted that there are some differences; yet these are not more than may be easily accounted for by the difference of age and of aim in the author. Zechariah (ii. 4) was a young man when he composed the first part, and was possibly quite advanced when he composed the second. The first part is in large measure descriptive, the second wholly prophetic; and there was room in the latter for an elevation and grandeur which were not called for before. It surely is not an accepted canon of criticism that because an author writes at one time in a certain style, he must always use the same in any subsequent work. This reasoning would (as T. V. Moore says) make us affirm that Burke could not be the author of the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, because he wrote the *Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful*, which is as simple and subdued as the former is impassioned and brilliant. Moreover, it is worthy of remark that the first part, which on all sides is admitted to be of post-exile origin, presents some great diversities of conception and expression. What can be more unlike the bold and startling symbolism of the night visions than the plain didactic utterances contained in the two chapters (vii. and viii.) which follow them? Yet no one has suggested a different author here. Why then should we think of one when we come to the second part, where the variation is certainly no greater? A word may be added respecting the dependence of Zechariah upon the earlier Prophets (see the citations and references in § 5) as evidence of his posteriority. It is true that Köhler, himself a defender of the genuineness, declines to use this argument, saying that it is impossible to decide in such cases which is the original source of the words, phrases, and images used. But the point is well taken by Stahllein, that it is far more likely that one Prophet quoted from many than that many quoted

from one. Indeed, it was this consideration principally which led De Wette to change his opinion, so that after having declared for two authors of Zechariah in three editions of his Introduction, he returned to the traditional view in the fourth.

(i.) The adverse theory claims that the compilers of the Canon found these six chapters either together or in parts, floating around as a part of the inspired literature of the nation and generally recognized as such, but without having the name of any author prefixed; and that by mistake they put them in connection with the acknowledged prophecies of Zechariah. Here, it may be urged in reply, is an exceedingly improbable supposition at the outset. All the prophetic writings of the Old Testament of which we have any knowledge state in each case at the beginning the name of the author. This is true of the twelve Minor Prophets, of the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and of the particular prophetic visions of Daniel (viii. 1; viii. 1; ix. 1, 2; x. 1). This was not the case with the histories of Scripture, for the obvious reason that these, whether because they were drawn from the archives of the nation, or because they bore intrinsic evidence of their correctness, did not require to be authenticated by the authors' names. But prophecy had its entire value in its divine inspiration, and its human author must furnish in his name and personality the evidence that he stood in such a relation to God as to be made by Him a channel of revelation. This then being the case, it is wholly unreasonable to suppose that an anonymous prophecy was current among the Jews at the time when the Canon was made. On the contrary we are justified in holding that had such a nameless work come before the compilers, they would have rejected it as on its face spurious.

(j.) The testimony of the Jews on this subject is unanimous. Not only the learned scribes in the days of Ezra and afterwards who compiled the Canon, but the schools of Hillel and Shammai who flourished in Jerusalem just before and after the time of our Lord, the great Jewish Seminars of Tiberias and Babylon, the authors of the Targums, and the continuous series of learned Rabbins down to the Reformation, all with one consent, accept the Book of Zechariah just as it stands in the Old Testament as the product of one man, the contemporary of Haggai and Zerubbabel. Of the learning of these men there can be no question. They were as well able to judge questions of evidence, internal or external, as any modern critic. They were notorious for their extreme jealousy for the integrity of the sacred writings. Their absolute silence as to any diversity of authorship is wholly inexplicable, if the apparent indications of that fact have anything like the degree of strength and clearness which is claimed by the opponents of the traditional view.

Mr. Perowne, the author of the article on Zechariah in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, concludes a review of the whole argument, with the remark, "It is not easy to say which way the weight of evidence preponderates." I cannot agree with this opinion. Of course it would be idle to say that there is no ground for suspecting the preëxile date of the chapters in question. Too many critics of various countries and of different shades of theological opinion, have agreed in adopting this view to warrant its contemptuous rejection. At the same time a careful review of the case justifies the immemorial historical tradition. No dates are given, because none were needed, the entire outlook being on the distant future. The author's name is not once mentioned; but the same is true of the later prophecies of Isaiah, the twenty-six brilliant chapters which close the book. The northern kingdom is not mentioned in the last three chapters, while it does occur in the three preceding; but if its mention in the latter has no historical significance, its omission in the former need have none. The efforts made to explain particular predictions by occurrences in Hebrew history prior to the Captivity, have totally failed, as e. g., the conquest of the sea-coast (ix. 1-8), the victory over Javan (ix. 13-17), the feeding of the flock of slaughter (xi.), the general repentance (xii. 10-14), or the inward purity and universal ascendancy of Judah (xiv. 16-21). But most of these can be very satisfactorily shown to be fulfilled in the period between the restoration from Babylon and the founding of the Christian Church; and any others may safely be considered as belonging to the as yet unfulfilled purposes of the Most High. What then is there startling in the thought that Zechariah in the later years of life, under the guidance of the same inspiration which undescribably vouchsafed to him the night-visions, proceeded to record these two oracles or burdens sketching in outline the future fortunes of the people of God, exhibiting their struggles and triumphs, their sins and purification, and especially their Priest-king, not merely in his wide and peaceful reign, but also in the rejection, humiliation, and sacrifice by which that reign is procured? Then, since w



know that Jeremiah on one occasion by divine command (xxxvi. 2) reduced to writing all the prophecies of his preceding ministry, why might not Zechariah have done the same thing, making one complete record of all that the Lord had seen fit to reveal by him?

Furthermore, let the reader compare the course of thought in the eight night visions and their appendix with that of the second part, and he will hardly fail to see a surprising coincidence in the general scope, whatever may be the variations in detail. There are the same promises of increase and enlargement, of protection and security, of overthrow of foes, of removal of iniquity, of effusion of the Spirit, of the punishment of the incorrigible, and of the final ingathering of far-off peoples. This is apparent from a glance at the contents of the respective sections as given in § 5, but is still more evident upon a careful continuous reading of each part with the attention fixed upon the order of thought and its general expression. As to the development of the Messianic idea, the lowly and peaceful rider upon an ass's foal (ch. ix. 9) is quite in harmony with the repeated use in the former part (iii. 8; vi. 12) of the modest term "branch" (= sucker, shoot). And although the later chapters contain a revelation of suffering in the good shepherd, of which there is no hint in the earlier, yet this is just what we should expect from the analogy of Isaiah, where we have the king and the kingdom, the branch and the glory in the earlier prophecies, but no indication of the solitary, patient, wronged, and martyred sufferer till we reach the later portion. It seems to have been the purpose of the Most High to give full force and sweep to the brighter and more glowing anticipations of Messiah's character and course, and after this preparation, to disclose the darker outlines of his extraordinary career. And if, as seems probable, the second part of Zechariah was issued at an advanced period of his life, when the restored exiles had outlived their early trials, and were firmly established on their ancestral soil, their situation would admit of a distinct reference to the suffering Messiah which would have been unsuitable at an earlier period when it was particularly required that they should be consoled and animated.

#### § 7. *The alleged Influence of the Persian Theology.*

That Zechariah shows in the style and form of his writings traces of his early Chaldean education has long been admitted, and the only matter of surprise is, that those traces are not more numerous and palpable. But it is often asserted that not only his language but his thought has been affected by contact with Ethnic races and religions, especially by the religious views of the ancient Persians. Thus Mr. Alger says (*Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 132), "We have unquestionable proofs that during the period from the Babylonish Captivity to the advent of Christ, the Jews borrowed and adopted a great deal from the Persian theology." Again, he quotes (p. 141) the acute and learned scholar, Dr. Martin Haug, as declaring that "Judaism after the exile received an important influence from Zoroastrianism, an influence which in regard to the doctrine of angels, Satan, and the resurrection of the dead, cannot be mistaken." As Zechariah does not refer to the resurrection, it is only the former two of these questions which need to be handled here.

There is no doubt that the two systems, the Hebrew and the Persian, substantially agree on these points. According to the latter, Ormuzd, the Principle of Good, the Fountain of Light, not only created the earth and man, but also a number of spiritual beings, some of whom stood as counsellors around his throne and all of whom were engaged in his service. Over against Ormuzd stood Ahriman, the Principle of Evil, the instigator of all wrong and misery and death, who also was attended by subordinate evil spirits like himself. And these two essential principles stood in eternal conflict with each other. Here then is the doctrine of good and evil angels, as a constituent and very ancient part of the Zoroastrian system, as all expositors of that system agree, however they may differ on other points. Its antiquity was at least six centuries before Christ, and may have been four or five centuries earlier while Dr. Haug, one of the latest scholars in this field, holds it for certain (*Alger*, p. 141) that Zoroaster lived from fifteen hundred to two thousand years before the Christian era. On the ground mainly of this early date, it is insisted that Zechariah borrowed from the Zend-Avesta. But surely this position is not tenable. What reason is there which compels us to believe that either borrowed from the other? The Hebrew system claims to be a revelation, begun at the fall of man, and gradually enlarging in the scope of its disclosures during a long course of ages, while it narrowed in the numbers of those to whom it was given from the whole race at the first to a particular division in the time of Noah, to a par-

secular family in the time of Abraham, and lastly to a single individual in the time of Jacob, whose descendants constituted the chosen seed. If this be admitted, what is to hinder the view that some portions of the primeval revelation, to Adam, Noah, or Abraham, may have floated down the stream of time outside the channel of the covenant, and, being appropriated by Zoroaster, were wrought by him into the system which bears his name? Beyond all question the tradition of the flood thus descended in almost every direction. It is surely not unreasonable to think that other traditions were transmitted in the same way. But in only one instance were they seized by a man able to retain these fragments of primitive truth and develop them into a complete monotheistic system. In this way the origin of the Zoroastrian doctrine as to angels, good and bad, may be fairly accounted for. But if on the other hand the postulate of an original revelation at the beginning be wholly denied, we are not shut up to the conclusion that Zechariah and his predecessors borrowed from the author of the ancient Persian faith. For if Zoroaster was able by his own faculties to ex-cogitate the system which bears his name, why may not the same power be supposed to have inhered in one or more of the eminent Hebrews? On the plane of mere naturalism, the question resolves itself simply into one of mental grasp and constructive power, and on what possible ground can it be claimed that Moses or Samuel or David were unable to do what the East Bactrian reformer did? Or even if one should allow the preposterous assertion of Mr. Alger (p. 141), that, "The Hebrew theology had no Satan, no demonology until after the residence at Babylon," why could not Zechariah himself have developed this interesting fact of the unseen world without Ethnic aid? He was the heir of a civilisation and a literature which had existed for centuries, as well as of by far the purest and most spiritual monotheism which the world has ever seen, and was certainly in a condition to lead truth rather than to borrow it.

Nor does it avail to say, as has been said, "How often the Hebrew people lapsed into idolatry, accepting Pagan gods, doctrines, and ritual, is notorious." For this remark, true as it is, does not meet the case. The people did frequently fall away under the pressure of temptation. The instances are too numerous to be recounted, stretching all the way from the calf worship instituted by Aarón at the foot of Sinai, down to the weeping for Thammuz, and the chambers of imagery which Ezekiel rebuked. But the same faithful narrative which informs us of these apostasies, also informs us that they were never regarded as anything else than departures from the truth. However widely they might prevail, always a few were left who remained faithful to the covenant, and these preserved the hereditary faith intact. Error was transient, truth permanent. A sure evidence of this is found in the Book of Psalms. The human authors of this inspired liturgy were many, and they flourished at widely different periods, yet the theology of the book is the same throughout. The earliest Psalm and the latest agree in every doctrinal sentiment. Even in the northern kingdom where, although Jehovah was still worshipped (except in the times of Ahab and Jezebel), idolatry was formally established, the Prophets who officiated in that kingdom (Hosea, Amos, etc.) never gave place to the prevailing errors, but rebuked them with the utmost vigor and boldness. There is not a single instance in which Hebrew theology was shaped or even colored by these outside influences. Its authorized expounders with one consent rejected every suggestion of the heathen. Why then should Zechariah have proved an exception? Why should he violate the usage of a thousand years and accept new doctrines from a heathen source? The very fact that the nation previously often went astray in whole or in part, and in some instances for a length of time, and yet never succeeded in ingrafting its errors upon its own literature, renders it a most unlikely thing that Zechariah should have turned aside to borrow a heathen superstition.

Again, if the Prophet borrowed from the Persian system, why did he stop short with its doctrine of angels? How came he to escape its grand peculiarity — the eternal and necessary existence of Ahriman? This is the answer which Zoroaster gave to the vexed question of all theologies and all ages, Whence comes evil? And it is the best or most plausible solution which unassisted reason can render to that perplexing problem. Now if Zechariah obtained from Babylon the idea of Satan, he must have become familiar with the whole doctrine of the Persians upon this subject. How came he to take just so much and no more? Not a trace of dualism appears in any portion of his prophecies. True, he does not, like his illustrious predecessor Isaiah (xlv. 7), put his foot upon the seductive theory with such significant words as these: "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." But he ignores it as contemptuously as

if it were unworthy of notice. Yet if he was indebted to this system for the suggestion of an evil spiritual being, the adversary of God and man, it is certainly fair to suppose that in adopting one part of the view, he would at least have dated at his rejection of the other and more characteristic portion.

Once more. All the circumstances of the case oppose the alleged indebtedness of the Prophet to the Zend-Avesta. The Jews were carried to Babylon against their will, and one of the most painful features of this compulsory exile was its interference with their religious worship and privileges. They had no temple, no altar, no sacrifices, no festivals, no solemn processions, nothing but the law, the Sabbath, and at first the occasional voice of a Prophet. But they appear, with the exception of such as were taken for domestic service, to have been settled together as a sort of colony, so that there was not much difficulty in preserving their ancestral traditions. To these they adhered, seemingly with the most steadfast determination because they were cut off from their regular forms of worship. As Ewald remarks over and over (*Geschichte d. V. I.*, iv. *passim*), they became entirely self-centered, their thoughts reverted incessantly to their past history, to their peculiar position among the nations of the earth, and to the singular hope of a Deliverer to come which lay at the bottom of their political and religious organization. This is shown by the fact of restoration. Instead of being hopelessly dispersed and merged among the nations with whom they were identified for more than two generations, they survived in sufficient numbers and with enough national spirit, to avail themselves of the permission of Cyrus, and return to their desolated ancestral homes and there renew the old commonwealth. The severity of their trials only endeared to them the more their former faith and institutions. A gleam of this feeling shines out in the touching strains of the 137th Psalm, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" One thing is certain. There was a complete and surprising change wrought in the whole body in respect to idol worship. Before the Captivity they were incessantly falling into this snare. There was scarcely one of their heathen neighbors whom they did not at some time imitate in their objects of worship. It made no difference who presented the temptation or what was its particular nature, they were always ready to exchange the glory of the uncorruptible God for a lie, and bow down to the objects their own hands had made. But after the Captivity all this was reversed. Henceforth they became proof against any such allurements. Nay, so far from going of themselves into idolatry, they defied the power of any ruler to force them into it. It was the insane fury of Antiochos Epiphanes for the introduction of the Greek cultus into Judæa which occasioned innumerable martyrdoms, and at last provoked the insurrection of the Maccabees and the series of heroic struggles by which they achieved the independence of their country.

The question then recurs — How is it possible that one of the leaders of the people, an inspired Prophet, who shared in all their intense national convictions and hopes, and who as a Jew regarded Gentiles with far more of scorn and dislike than a Greek of the age of Pericles did those whom he called *βάρβαροι*, — how could he think of improving or perfecting his theology by adaptations from the views of uncircumcised heathen? Such a thing might have been possible (though not probable) at an earlier day, but that it should have occurred at the era of the restoration, is, I humbly insist, quite inconceivable. Nor is it of any avail to refer to the acknowledged excellences of Zoroastrianism, — its pure theism, its fierce hatred of idolatry, its elevated morality, and its doctrine of a future state, — as if these would conciliate the favor of a devout Hebrew and induce him to adopt new views from such a source. The immemorial faith of the nation was that it had been chosen by Jehovah as the depository of his truth, and therefore had express and immediate revelations from him on all points of religious faith. As long as they held this conviction, it would seem nothing less than treason and sacrilege to borrow doctrinal opinions from any ethnic system, however pure and spiritual it might seem. A pious Jew could not admit that he had anything to learn about religion from an uncircumcised stranger.

#### § 8. Literature.

I. PATRISTIC. Jerome († 420), Theodore of Mopsuestia († 429), Cyril of Alexandria († 444), Theodoret († 457), all treat of Zechariah in Commentaries upon *The Twelve Minor Prophets*.

II. JEWISH. R. Salomon ben Isaak, called Jarchi or Raschi († 1105). R. Abraham ben Meir ibn Ezra, called Aben Ezra († 1167), David Kimchi († 1230). All these with the Tar-

gum are contained in Buxtorf's *Itabbinical Bible*, Basle, 1818. Kimchi, translated by Dr. McNul, London, 1837.

III. REFORMERS.—M. Luther, *Ausleg. des Proph. Zecharias*, Wittenberg, 1528; Melancthon, *Comm. in Zechariam*, Wittenb., 1553; Calvin, *Prælec. in Proph. Min.*; Tremellius and Julius, *Bib. Sac.*, 1579; J. J. Grynæus, *Comm. in Zech.*, Geneva, 1581.

IV. LATER WRITERS. C. Vltrings, *Comm. ad Zach. quæ Supersunt*, 1754; B. G. Flügge, *Weissag. des Proph. Zach.*, 1784; Venema, *Sermon. in Zech.*, 1787; Blayney, *New Translation of Zech.*, 1787. Besides, in works on the *Minor Prophets*: Cocceus, 1652; Markius, 1698-1700; Archbishop Newcome, 1785.

V. OF THE PRESENT CENTURY. F. B. Köster, *Meletem. in Zach. partem poster.*, 1818; E. Forberg, *Comm. Crit. and Exeg. in Zach. part. post.*, 1824; J. Stonard, *Comm. on Zechariah*, London, 1824; Hengstenberg, *Integrität des Sach.*, Berlin, 1831; *Christology* (second edition), 1856; J. D. F. Burger, *Études sur Zech.*, Strasburg, 1841; M. Baumgarten, *Nachtgesichte Sach.*, 1854; E. F. J. v. Ortenberg, *Die Bestandtheile des buch. Sach.*, 1859; W. Neuman, *Weissag. des Sachar.*, 1859; Th. Kliefoth, *Der Proph. Sachar.*, 1862.

In works on the *Minor Prophets*: Rosenmüller, 1826; Henderson, 1830; F. W. C. Umbreit, 1845; J. Schlier, 1861; Hitzig, 1863; C. F. Keil, 1866; Prof. Cowles, N. Y., 1866; C. Wordsworth, 1870.

In works on the *Post-exile Prophets*: T. V. Moore, N. Y., 1856; A. Köhler, 1860-65; W. Pressel, 1870.

In Introductions: De Wette, Hävernick, Bleek, Stähelin, Donaldson.

In other writings: J. C. K. Hoffman, *Weissagung und Erfüll.*, 1841; *Schriftbeweis*, 1857; Reinke, *Die Mess. Weissagungen*, Glessen, 1859-1862.





# THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH.

## PART FIRST.

### UTTERANCES FOR THE PRESENT TIME.

#### CHAPTERS I.-VIII.

#### I. THE INTRODUCTION.

##### CHAPTER I. 1-6.

A. *A Call to Repentance* (vers. 1-3). B. *Enforced by an Appeal to the Experience of their Fathers* (vers. 4-6).

- 1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,
- 2 Jehovah hath been sore displeased with your fathers.<sup>1</sup>
- 3 Therefore say thou<sup>2</sup> unto them, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, Return ye unto me, saith Jehovah of Hosts, And I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 4 Be not as your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, Turn, I beseech you, from your evil ways and from your evil doings;<sup>3</sup> But they hearkened not, and paid no attention to me, Saith Jehovah.
- 5 Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, can they live forever?
- 6 Nevertheless,<sup>4</sup> my words and my statutes,<sup>5</sup> Which I commanded my servants the prophets, — Did they not overtake<sup>6</sup> your fathers, so that they turned and said, Like as Jehovah of Hosts purposed to do unto us, According to our ways and according to our doings, So hath He dealt with us.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 2. — The collocation of the verb and its cognate noun renders this verse very emphatic. Literally, Angry was Jehovah at your fathers with anger.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 3. — The *vay conv.* with the Perfect, indicating a necessary consequence from what precedes, is rendered in the imperative. — אלהים does not refer to the nearest antecedent "fathers," but to the prophet's contemporaries, implied in the pronoun "you."

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 4. — The Kethib מַעֲלִילֵיכֶם is to be retained, both because the preposition is wanting in the Kethib, and also because the latter seems to have originated in the offense taken at the masculine ending in the plural of a noun feminine in the singular, although similar cases are not rare (Green, *Heb. Gram.*, § 200 b).

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 5. — הָיָה. This word is very inadequately rendered in the R. V., by the simple adverbative *but*.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 6. — הָיָה. For a precisely similar use of this word, see *Ezek. ii.* and *Job xliii. 14.*

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 6. — וַיִּפְּצוּ. The marginal rendering of R. V., *overtook*, is to be preferred to the text, *sate* *add.*

#### EXHORTICAL AND CRITICAL.

The main design of Zechariah's prophetic activity was to administer consolation and encouragement to the people of God still in a condition of weakness and suffering. This plainly appears

from the general tenor of the night-visions, from the promised change of fasts into festivals, and from the glowing pictures of future blessedness and honour which occur in the latter portion of his book. Yet it was necessary to prevent these consolations from being usurped by any to whom they

did not belong, and to show that repentance and holy living were indispensable conditions of the attainment of any of these blessings. This thought is again and again expressed in the course of the prophetic revelations (iii. 7, vi. 15, vii. 7-10, viii. 16, 17, x. 1, 2, xi. 10, xiv. 20), but it is made especially prominent in these opening verses, which seem to be a kind of introduction both to the prophet's labors in general, and also to the present collection of his utterances. In them Zechariah sounds the key-note of all spiritual religion, a return to God, and urges its importance by the mention of their fathers' sins and their fathers' punishments.

Ver. 1. In the eighth month, etc. The first note of time does not mean, "In the eighth new moon" (C. H. Michaëls, Köhler), because *chadesh* is never used in this sense in chronological notices. The general, introductory nature of this particular address did not require that the precise day of the month should be indicated. On other points in this verse, see the Introduction.

Ver. 2. Jehovah hath been sore displeased, etc. The mention of God's wrath is the ground of the summons in the following verse. Because God had been so angry with the fathers, the children should now repent in all sincerity. The severity of this wrath had been painfully shown in the overthrow of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, and the bitter exile in Babylon (Ps. cxxxvii.). The contradiction between this verse and the statement in ver. 17, that Jehovah was "but a little displeased," is only apparent, for the latter refers to the duration of the wrath, while the former expresses its intensity.

Ver. 3. Return ye . . . I will return. The exhortation and promise contained in this verse, often repeated elsewhere (Mal. iii. 7, Jas. iv. 8), are remarkably strengthened by the true repetition of "Saith Jehovah of Hosts." The occasion of the summons is not to be sought in a temporary abandonment of the work of rebuilding the Temple, for which there is no historical ground, but in the spiritual condition of the people. It reminded them that the mere outward work was not enough, but there was need of a thorough conversion, a genuine heartfelt return from their former works and ways to the service and enjoyment of God.

Ver. 4. Be not as your fathers. Since naturally parents are apt to transmit their own character and course to their children, the prophet here repeats his injunction in a negative form, bidding his countrymen carefully to shun the example of their predecessors, who had utterly scorned the Lord's remonstrances. The former prophets are those before the exile, and Zechariah intentionally overlooks Daniel, because he officiated at a heathen court and not in the midst of his people, and his prophecies treated not so much of the inward duties of Israel as of its outward fortunes amid the mighty revolutions of the heathen world. For a full summation of the course of the former prophets as here set forth, see 2 Kings xvii. 13-23. The ways and works of the earlier generation are called evil, in the first instance, because they were morally corrupt, but also because they were followed by sore consequences (Köhler).

Ver. 5. Ye are fathers, where are they? The concluding verses of the section sustain the warning not to imitate the fathers, by pointing out the fate which overtook them in consequence of their disobedience. The general sense is plain, and acknowledged by all interpreters, but the precise force of the questions in ver. 5 is variously stated.

Both, of course, imply a negative answer, but in what sense is the decrease of the prophets mentioned? Some (Jerome, Cyril), referring to Jeremiah xxvii. 10, suppose, that false prophets are intended; but the persons spoken of here must be the same as those mentioned in the preceding verse, who are manifestly true servants of God. Others make the second question a rejoinder of the people to the first (Raschi, Harger, etc.), which seems forced. Others say that a contrast is presented between the fleeing, dying prophets, and the ever-living word of Jehovah (Colvin, Grotius, Hitzig, etc.), as if the meaning were, I allow that both your fathers and my prophets are dead; but my words, are they dead? but the latter part of this contrast is not found in the text, but supplied by the interpreters. Another class conceive that the point of the second question is to remind Zechariah's contemporaries that the voice of prophecy would soon cease, and therefore they should heed it while they had the opportunity (Abarb., Ewald), which is a very natural sense of the words if they stood alone; but it is contradicted by verse 6, which shows that the reference is not to the existing, but to the former prophets. The true view is the one given by Köhler and others, that the former of the two verses contains a concession which is limited and corrected by the latter. Thus: Your fathers are long since dead, and it may seem as though they had thus escaped the threatenings pronounced against them; the prophets, too, have gone the way of all flesh, and apparently their words died with them; nevertheless your fathers did not die until the threatenings of the short-lived prophets had overtaken them, nor until they themselves had acknowledged that fact. This view is sustained by the strong disjunctive conjunction at the commencement of verse 6. The phrase, "take hold," in E. V., fails to give the force of the Hebrew verb. The prophet conceives of God's purposes of wrath as commissioned messengers which followed the Israelites and overtook them (cf. Deut. xxviii. 15, 45). Mourful acknowledgments of this fact are to be found in Lamentations ii. 17, in Daniel's penitential prayer (ix. 4 ff.), and in Ezra's humbling confession (ix. 6, 7). There may be long delay, and consequently a growing hope of escape, but sooner or later every transgressor makes the affecting acknowledgment of the Psalmist (xi. 13), "mine iniquities have overtaken me."

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The opening words of Zechariah state a truth of great importance, — and none the less so because in every age a persistent attempt has been made to deny or to evade it — that *God has wrath*. The blinding influence of their own depravity renders men insensible to the evil of sin, and they easily come to transfer their own views to their Maker — "thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Ps. l. 21). Hence they attribute to Him an easy good nature which readily condones moral offenses and is quite too gentle to give effect to the forebodings of a guilty conscience. To set forth his justice, and assert his prerogative as governor of the world, is regarded as an unwarrantable disturbance of men's peace and an impeachment of the amiableness of the divine character. This device is as old as the Apostles, and Paul exposes it with his usual vehemence, "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for be-

cause of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. v. 6). God has wrath. Nature bears witness to the fact. The earth does not everywhere smile with verdure and beauty, but all over its surface shows blots and scars which suggest the moral disorder of the race. This fact has been set forth with equal eloquence and truth by Mr. Hoskin. Speaking of the revelations of God made on the face of creation, he says, "Wrath and threatening are invariably mingled with love; and in the utmost solitudes of nature, the existence of hell seems to me as legibly declared by a thousand spiritual utterances as of heaven. It is well for us to dwell with thankfulness on the unfolding of the flower and the falling of the dew, and the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine; but the blasted trunk, the barren rock, the moaning of the bleak winds, the roar of the black, perilous whirlpools of the mountain streams, the solemn solitudes of moors and seas, the continual fading of all beauty into darkness and of all strength into dust, have these no language for us? We may seek to escape their teachings by reasonings touching the good which is wrought out of all evil; but it is vain sophistry. The good succeeds to the evil as day succeeds the night, but so also the evil to the good. Gerisim and Ebal, birth and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell, divide the existence of man and his futurity."

2. The words in ver. 2 do not belong to the message to the people, but were delivered only to the Prophet; and they disclose to us the internal pressure under which he entered upon his office (I press): A due sense of the power of God's wrath lies at the basis of all true earnestness on the part of his Prophets. It is the "burning fire shut up in the bones" (Jer. xx. 9) which imparts its own vehemence to the message, and produces corresponding conviction in them that hear. We observe it in the Prophet of all Prophets, the Saviour Himself. His groaning in spirit at the grave of Lazarus, his tears at the sight of Jerusalem, show how deeply he felt the terrible nature of God's anger. Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* affords a remarkable testimony from his own experience. "Now this part of my work I fulfilled with great earnestness, for the terrors of the law and guilt for my transgressions lay heavy on my conscience; I preached what I felt, what I smartingly did feel, even that under which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment. Indeed, I have been as one sent to them from the dead; I went myself in chains, to preach to them in chains; and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to be aware of."

3. The Lord's first message to the people by the mouth of Zechariah contains the fundamental principle of all his communications to fallen men, alike in the Old Testament and in the New. There is a command and a promise, each comprehending in itself all others of the same class. Men are

summoned to turn back to God, and then He engages to return to them. Alienation from God is the primary sin. Men turn away from their Maker, hide from Him like Adam, or wander off like the prodigal, and of course are dissatisfied and wretched. Having left the fountain of living waters, they find the cisterns they hew out for themselves to be broken cisterns which can hold no water. No matter how often the experiment is repeated, it always fails. The only escape, the first duty, is to turn to the Lord. This duty would be difficult, nay, it would be impossible, but for the gracious promise which accompanies it. God is found of those who seek Him. This is a truth of the older dispensation as well as of the later. The father in our Saviour's parable who, while yet the wayward son was a great way off, discerned, and welcomed, and ran to meet his returning steps, is only a vivid picture of him who waited to be gracious all through the history of his ancient people. Even in the early days of Job, Eliphaz announced (xlii. 21) the cheering assurance, "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee."

4. God's providence not only ensures the fulfillment of his threatenings, but compels the acknowledgment of that fulfillment from those who suffer it. In the case of the Jews this recognition was frequently uttered, as mentioned before. (See Exeget. and Crit., *ad finem*.)

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL

T. V. MOORE: It is a sign of a sickly piety when men are willing to hear nothing of the wrath of God against sin. If men expect God to return to them in prosperity, they must return to Him in penitence. The flower-averted from the sun must turn toward it, to catch its genial smile.

PRESARE: No mercy without return, and no return without mercy. He who will not hear, shall feel. Haste (*eile*) that you may not be overtaken (*ervilt*). 1. Haste, for your day of grace is short, and even the messengers of grace are passing away. 2. If once you are overtaken, your eyes will open too late, and only with trembling lips can you give honor to the Lord.

WONDAWORTH: Zechariah comes forth like John the Baptist, and begins his preaching with a call to repentance, and warns the people by the history of their fathers, that no spiritual privileges will profit them without holiness, but rather will aggravate their guilt and increase their condemnation if they disobey God.

CALVIN: We learn here that the examples set up as a shield for wrongdoing are so far from being of any weight before God that they enhance our guilt. Yet this folly infatuates many, for the Papists claim their religion to be holy and irreprehensible, because it has been handed down by their fathers.

## II. THE NIGHT VISIONS.

## CHAPTER I. 7-VI. 15.

This division contains a series of visions all given at one time and therefore naturally supposed to be closely connected with each other and to exhibit an orderly progress of thought. The first vision sets forth the evident need of a divine interference in behalf of the people, with a strong assurance that it shall be vouchsafed. The second indicates one form of this interference in the fact that the foes are driven away. The third promises great enlargement and absolute security. The fourth exhibits the forgiveness of sin which had been the cause of all the previous troubles and endangered the recurrence of them. The fifth is a counterpart to the fourth by promising the positive communication of God's Spirit and graces which secure sanctification as well as justification. The sixth guards against a perversion of the two preceding visions as if they warranted security on the part of the impenitent, by exhibiting the fearful curse of God upon all sinners of whatever class. The seventh enforces the same point still further by representing that a longer and yet more dreadful deportation than that to Babylon awaited the unfaithful members of the theocracy. Finally, the eighth completes the entire series of visions in an artistic manner by returning to the point whence they set out, and repeating much the same imagery. It shows the accomplishment of all which the first image promised. From the purified and divinely protected theocracy, symbolized by mountains of brass, there go forth executors of judgment who do not stay their hands until God's Spirit is completely satisfied. But there is another future in reserve for the distant heathen, besides that of judgment. They are to be converted from enemies into friends, and in the days of the Branch shall come from far, and freely contribute to build up and glorify the Lord's holy kingdom. This cheering thought is exhibited in the shape of a symbolical action, appended to the visions and appropriately closing and crowning their hallowed disclosures.

## VISION I. THE MAN AMONG THE MYRTLES.

## CHAPTER I. 7-17.

A. *A symbolical Representation of the tranquil Condition of the Heathen World and consequent Need of Divine Interference* (vers. 7-11). B. *Intercession for Suffering and Desolate Judaea* (vers. 12, 13). C. *Assurances of Relief and Restoration* (vers. 14-17).

- 7 On the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month which is the month Sebat,<sup>1</sup>  
 in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah to Zechariah, the son of  
 8 Iddo the prophet, saying: I saw that<sup>2</sup> night, and behold a man riding upon a  
 red horse, and he stood among the myrtles<sup>3</sup> that were in the valley, and behind  
 9 him were red, bay and white horses. And I said, what are these, my lord? And  
 10 the angel that talked with<sup>4</sup> me said to me, I will show thee what they are. And  
 the man who stood among the myrtles answered,<sup>5</sup> and said, These are they whom  
 11 Jehovah has sent to walk through the earth. And they answered the angel of  
 Jehovah who stood among the myrtles, and said, We have gone through the earth,  
 12 and behold, all the earth sits still<sup>6</sup> and is at rest. Then the angel of the Lord  
 answered and said, Jehovah of Hosts! how long wilt thou not pity Jerusalem and  
 the cities of Judah, against which thou hast been angry these<sup>7</sup> seventy years?  
 13 And Jehovah answered the angel that talked with me, good words, comforting<sup>8</sup>  
 14 words. And the angel that talked<sup>9</sup> with me, said to me, Cry, saying:

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,

I am jealous<sup>10</sup> for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy,

- 15 And I burn with great anger against the nations at ease.

For I was angry for a little, but they helped forward the affliction.

- 16 Therefore thus saith Jehovah,

I have returned to Jerusalem in mercy.<sup>11</sup>

My house shall be built in her, saith Jehovah of Hosts,

And a measuring line<sup>12</sup> shall be stretched over Jerusalem.

- 17 Cry also,<sup>13</sup> saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,



My rills shall yet overflow<sup>11</sup> with prosperity,  
And Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion,  
And shall yet choose Jerusalem.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 7. — **חֹדֶשׁ**, the month which extended from the new moon of February to the next new moon. The name is Chaldean, but of uncertain etymology.

2 Ver. 8. — **לַיְלָה** is not accusative of duration — by night, for which there is no other example, but the object of the night, namely, that of the day mentioned in the preceding verse.

3 Ver. 8. — The *myriks*. Ewald, following the LXX., supposes the true reading of **יְהוָה** to be **יְהוָה**, as in vi 1, and renders *mountains*; but there is no reason for departing from the Masoretic text, and the relation of the last vision to the first is one not of resemblance but contrast.

4 Ver. 9. — **בִּי** has been translated *in me, to me, through me, and with me*. The last is more accordant with usage (Num. xii. 8) and the connection.

5 Ver. 10. — Henderson says that **קָנָה** signifies to *commence* or *proceed* to speak, as well as to answer, and cites examples in the New Testament as used in the same way. But his remark is true neither of the one nor the other. The reference always is to a question preceding, either expressed or implied, or to the resumption of discourse by the same speaker after an interval, as in 2 Cor. xii. 9. Cf. Vitringa's remark quoted under vi. 4, *infra*.

6 Ver. 11. — *Sit still* is a far better rendering of **יָשָׁב** than the bold and prosaic derived sense adopted by the LXX. and the Vulgate, *sedentate, habitate*.

7 Ver. 12. — **זֶה שְׁעֵים שָׁנָה** might be rendered *now seventy years* (cf. vii. 8). A similar combination of noun and pronoun in the singular with numeral adjection in the plural, is not rare. See Deut. vii. 2-4; Josh. xiv. 10; Esther iv. 11. Nordheimer (§ 890) explains it as referring to the abstract idea of time; but it seems to me to be due rather to the conception of the various years as a single period or cycle, which like a collective noun would of course admit of a singular pronoun.

8 Ver. 13. — **קָנָה**. The Keri omits the dagesh in **ק**, but some codd. in Kennicott have the form **קָנָה**, which grammatically is the more correct. It is not an adjective, but a noun in apposition.

9 Ver. 14. — This verse and the one before it exemplify one of the infelicities of the E. V., which renders the same original word, in ver. 13 *looked*, and in ver. 14 *commanded*.

10 Ver. 14. — **הָיָה**. The *pret.* means not merely, "I have become jealous," but "I have been and am." God's jealousy had already begun to manifest itself.

11 Ver. 15. — First, *sub voce*, with great plausibility, renders **קָנָה** intransitively, "they exerted their power" with a view to destruction.

12 Ver. 16. — **רַחֲמִים** occurs only in the plural. To translate it so, therefore, as in A. V., while apparently more literal, is in reality less so.

13 Ver. 16. — The Kethib **קָנָה**, to be read **קָנָה**, is an old form, found elsewhere only in 1 King vii. 23 and Jer. xxii. 20, for which was substituted the contracted form **קָנָה**.

14 Ver. 17. — **עוֹד**, also here seems to express the sense better than the customary *yet*. The Prophet was to say something more besides what he was told in ver. 14.

15 Ver. 17. — **הַפְּתִיחָה** is simply a variant orthography of **הַפְּתִיחָה** (Green H. O., § 188, 3).

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 7. The date of this revelation is from three to four months after Zechariah's first prophecy and exactly two months after Haggai's last, namely, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, Shebat, or February, of the year 519. The precise day of the month, here and in Haggai ii. 10-20, seems to have been suggested by the fact that on just this day of the sixth month the building of the Temple had been resumed (Hag. i. 14, 15). The Lord thus indicated his pleasure in the resumption of the work. The visions are called the word of Jehovah, because they had the significance and answered the purpose of oral revelations.

Ver. 8. I saw that night. The disclosure was made to the Prophet, not in a dream (Ewald, Hitzig), but in a vision. His senses were not locked in sleep, but like Peter at Joppa (Acts x. 10, xi. 5) he was *doxordet*. This trance-like condition, according to iv. 1, bears the same relation to ordi-

nary human consciousness which that does to the condition of sleep. A man's usual state when under the control of the senses and able to see only what his own faculties discover, is one of spiritual sleep; but an ecstatic condition, in which the senses and the entire lower life are quiescent, and only pictures of divine objects are reflected in the soul as in a pure and bright mirror, is one of spiritual waking. The Prophet received his visions at night, because then his susceptibility for divine communications was most lively, in consequence of the stillness, the suspension of worldly cares and the freedom from outward impressions. In the space of one night the whole series of stately symbolic scenes passed before his spiritual eye, for the title in ver. 7 extends to the end of chap. vi. after which a new title first occurs, and besides, the narrative itself shows (ii. 1; iv. 1, etc.) that as soon as one vision ended another began. Behold, a man riding upon a red horse, etc. A won, i. e., one in the shape or appearance of a man, for manifestly an angel and not a human being is intended. He is seated upon a red horse, the meaning of

which is seen in the fact that red is the color of blood. In Rev. vi. 4, it is a rider on a red horse who receives a great sword and has power to take peace from the earth and cause men to kill one another. The color of the horse then is a symbol of the purpose of its rider namely, wrath and bloodshed. He stood among the myrtles that were

in *הַיְּמִינִי*. The meaning of this word is much contested. The Vulgate gives it as *profundo*, which supposes that the text is only another form of *הַיְּמִינִי*, which ordinarily means the depths of the sea. Hengstenberg and Baumgarten adopt this, and explain it as a symbolical designation of the abyss-like power of the world, in which the Church stands like a feeble, lowly shrub. Others (Gesenius, Henderson), following the LXX., derive

the word from *לֵל*, in the sense of shade (so Dr. Van Dyck in the *New Arabic Version*), but in this case we should expect a different middle vowel, and besides, as Pressel says, it would be a pleonasm to speak of trees in a shady place. Others (Hitzig, Fürst, Bunsen), following an Arabic analogy, render it *test*, by which they suppose heaven is intended, but this is extremely artificial. There seems no reason to depart from the Vulgate and Targum, or to make it other than = *deep place*, i. e., a low valley or bottom. It will then stand in vivid contrast with the corresponding point in the eighth vision, which is the complement of the first. There, the chariots start from between two mountains of brass—the theocracy under the mighty protection of Jehovah; here, the horsemen issue from amid myrtles in an open bottom—the Church in a condition of feebleness and exposure. Behind the first rider are other horses of different colors. They have riders (see ver. 11), but this fact is allowed to be understood, because the emphasis is laid upon the color of the horses. They are like their leader red (explained above), or bay, or white. The last like the first is easily understood from Scripture usage—white being the reflection of heavenly glory (Matt. xvii. 2), and therefore the symbol of victory (Rev. vi. 2).

But the second epithet is difficult. *שָׂרָר* is rendered by the LXX.: *ῥοπαλοειδὲς*, Vulg., *varii*, Peshito *vernicolores*, after whom Maurer, Umbreit, Kell, etc., render it as in text of A. V., *speckled*. But Gesenius and Fürst derive it from an Arabic root, signifying *dark red*, and Hengstenberg renders this *brown*, but Köhler *bay* or *flame colored*. The latter gives the better sense. The colors do not signify the three kingdoms against whom the riders were sent (Cyril, Jerome, *et al.*), for all appear to go in company, nor the quarters of the heavens (Maurer, Hitzig, *et al.*), for the fourth quarter is wanting; but the nature of the mission which they had to perform, namely, to take an active part in the agitation of the nations, those upon red horses by war and bloodshed, those upon bay horses by burning and destroying, and those upon white horses by victory over the world.

Ver. 9. The Prophet asks, **What are these**, i. e., what do they signify? The question is addressed to one whom he calls *my lord*, but who is this? Manifestly, the one who gives the answer, the *angelus interpres*. It is no objection to this that he has not been mentioned before, for in prophecies, and especially in visions, from their dramatic character, persons are frequently introduced in such a way that only from what they say or do, can we learn who they are. This *angelus*

*interpres*, or *collocutor*, had for his sole function to open the spiritual eyes and ears of the Prophet and cause him to understand the meaning of the visions. The preposition in the phrase *בְּיָדָיו* is not to be understood, with Ewald, Kell, etc., as denoting the internal character of the communications made, for this would not distinguish him from the other angels of the vision, but the phrase is simply an official designation of the angel's character.

Ver. 10. **And the man who stood among, etc.** The rider on the red horse states the object of the horsemen's mission. He is said to have *unscreed*, because, although not referring to any definite question, his words were a reply to the Prophet's desire for an explanation.

Ver. 11. The riders themselves state the result of their mission. This is called an *answer* to the Angel of the Lord, because it replies to a question implied in the circumstances. It is given to the Angel of the Lord. But is this a created or an uncreated angel? The latter view is maintained by McCaul, Lange, Hengstenberg, Philipp, and Kohls, the former by Hoffman, Delitzsch, Kurtz, Köhler, Pressel. That the angel of Jehovah is distinguished from the other angels, and in many places identified with Jehovah, is undeniable (Gen. xvi. 7-10, xxxi. 11-13, xxxii. 23-31 comp. with Hos. xii. 4; Ex. iii. 2-4; Judg. vi. 11-22; Zech. iii. 1, 2). On the other hand, there are passages where he seems to be discriminated from Jehovah (Ex. xxiii. 20-22, xxxii. 34). The simplest way of reconciling these two classes is to adopt the old view that this angel is the Second person of the Godhead, even at this early period appearing as the revealer of the Father. The mingled clearness and obscurity of the representation is quite analogous to the same features in the delineation of the Messiah in Isa. li, xiv. lxii, ex., and in various prophecies before and after David's time. In this vision he appears first as a man upon a red horse, then as the leader of the troop standing behind him, and when these have made their report, as the angel of Jehovah who presents the prayer of the pious before God. The answer which he receives from the troop is that all the earth sits still and is at rest,—a phrase upon which Wordsworth comments as denoting proud and licentious ease, because, as he says, the word for "at rest" is *shamun*. This is a strange mistake, for it is another word, *שָׁמֵן*, which rarely, if ever, has any moral significance, and means merely quiet, peaceful security, without reference to the way in which that state has been attained or is employed. Here the sense is that the nations at large were dwelling in a calm, serene repose, undisturbed by any foe. The reference seems to be to Hagai ii., where the Lord promised that in a little while He would shake the heavens and the earth and all nations, and in consequence his house would be filled with glory. The riders now report that having gone through the earth they find it not at all shaken but quiet and serene. This statement, furnishing such a vivid contrast to the prostrate and suffering condition of the people of God, gave occasion to the intercession recounted in the next verse.

Ver. 12. **How long wilt thou not pity Jerusalem, etc.** The language is that of intercessory exhortation. The reference to these seventy years does not imply that that period predicted by Jeremiah (xxv. 12) was just drawing to

a close, for it had already expired in the first year of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1). But although the people had been restored, they were still in a sad state, — the capital for the most part in ruins, its walls broken down, its gates burnt (Neh. i. 3), the population small, the greater part of the land still a waste, and the rebuilding of the Temple embarrassed with difficulties. It might well seem as if the troubles of the exile would never end, and the more so, since there was no sign of that violent agitation of the heathen world which was to be the precursor of Israel's exaltation. The intercession was effectual.

Ver. 13. And Jehovah answered, etc. Here the answer is given to another person than the questioner. The best explanation is that of Hengstenberg, that "the angel of the Lord had asked the question not for his own sake, but simply in order that consolation and hope might be communicated through the *angelus interpres* to the prophet, and through him to the nation at large." Good words are words that promise good. Cf. Josh. xxiii. 14 (Heb.); Jer. xxi. 10. The contents of these good and comforting words follow in vers. 14-17; the first two of which assert Jehovah's active affection for his people, and the latter two, his purpose to manifest that love in the restoration and enlargement of Jerusalem.

Ver. 14. I am jealous, etc. *חָמַדְתִּי*, lit. to burn, to glow, indicates a vehement emotion which may have its motive in jealousy (Num. v. 14), or in envy (Gen. xvi. 14), or in hatred (Gen. xxxvii. 11), or in love (Num. xxv. 11). The last expresses its force here, which is greatly strengthened by the addition of the cognate noun. Jehovah is inspired with a burning zeal for Jerusalem and for Zion, the holy hill which He has chosen for his habitation. He had already displayed this in part, and would soon develop it to the full.

Ver. 15. Toward the heathen, on the contrary, Jehovah burned with great anger. This was partly because they were "at ease," i. e., not merely tranquil, but in a state of carnal security, proudly confident in their power and prosperity, but mainly because, while He had been angry for a little, i. e., time (cf. Job x. 20), they, on the contrary, had helped forward the affliction, lit., had helped for evil, i. e., so that evil was the result. The Lord contemplated a moderate, limited chastisement in love, with a view to the purification and restoration of his people. The heathen, on the contrary, rioted in the sufferings of helpless Israel, and would willingly prolong them.

Ver. 16. I have returned . . . Jerusalem. The emphatic therefore indicates the consequences of God's love for Jerusalem. He has actually returned with purposes of mercy, and these shall be fully executed. All hindrances shall be removed, the Temple completed, and instead of scattered houses here and there, the whole city shall pass under the surveyor's measuring line. But the blessing is not to be confined to the capital, as appears from what follows.

Ver. 17. Cry also, i. e., in addition to the foregoing. The other cities of Judah shall overflow with prosperity, lit., be scattered, yet not by an invading foe, but by the inward pressure of abundant growth requiring them to diffuse themselves over a larger surface (cf. li. 4, viii. 4, ix. 17, x. 7). This overflow of blessing will assure the covenant people that Jehovah is still comforting Zion, and has by no means renounced the purpose in pursuance of which he had originally chosen Jerusalem.

The same cheering reference to God's electing love is found in ch. ii. 12 and iii. 2.

The object of this first vision was to satisfy the dispirited colony that although there was no present appearance of an approaching fulfillment of promised blessings, yet these blessings were sure. Jehovah had appointed the instruments of his righteous judgments, and by these would accomplish his purposes upon the ungodly nations, and thus secure the salvation of Zion. The fulfillment then is easily pointed out. The completion of the Temple, the restoration of the city under Ezra and Nehemiah, the increase of the population, all declared Jehovah's fidelity to his engagements. But this was only the beginning. Zechariah, like his predecessors in office, looks down the whole vista of the future, and utters germinant predictions, as Bacon calls them, which do not exhaust themselves in any one period, but wrap up in pregnant sentences long cycles of historical development. The first vision presents the general theme of the whole series, each of which stands closely related to the others, so that there is an evident advance from the beginning to the end, as will appear in the course of the exposition.

#### DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL.

1. How near are the seen and unseen worlds! Nor are they without sympathy with each other. We have a craving for the knowledge of creatures higher than ourselves, and yet fellow servants with us of the same Creator. All the various forms of Polytheism show this natural longing of the race, but the Scripture satisfies it by revealing to us the existence, character, and function of the holy angels. This revelation is not made merely to gratify a curiosity, however intelligent and reasonable, but to furnish important aid in the conduct of life. It pleases God to employ the agency of these supernatural beings in establishing his kingdom in the world. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) In the book of Genesis, after the call of Abraham, we observe frequent instances of this blessed ministry, guiding, protecting, and upholding the patriarchs (xviii., xix., xxiv., xxvii., xxxii.). Again, in the time of the Judges similar manifestations were made to Gideon and to Manoah. But at and after the Captivity, their interposition not only resumes its former frequency, but is manifested on a wider scale. To Daniel and Zechariah the angels are revealed, not only as watching over the covenant people, but as executing the counsels of Jehovah toward the heathen world. There does not seem to be the least necessity for attributing this circumstance to the influence of Chaldean or Persian modes of thought upon the minds of these prophets. They follow in the line of the earlier traditions of the chosen people, with only that degree of variation and expansion which is natural under the altered circumstances of the case. It was a comforting thought to a feeble colony overshadowed by a colossal empire to be reminded of superhuman helpers whose mighty interposition was ever at hand. Of course even these celestial beings could prove efficient only by the power of God, but their intermediate agency rendered that power more directly conceivable. In the New Testament there is not the same prominence given to these "sons of God" (Job xxviii. 7), but enough is stated of their ministrations at the Incarnation, in the wilderness, the



garden, and the sepulchre, and of their sympathy with the joys and sorrows of God's people, to make as real to the shining stairway which rose over Jacob's head to the clouds (Gen. xxviii. 12) still exists, and is traversed by the same holy beings. It is still true, as Spencer said, —

"They are no fight, they watch and duly stand,  
And their bright squadrons round about us plant,  
And all for love and nothing for reward;  
Oh! why should heavenly God to man have such regard?"

2. The extraordinary position assigned to the angel of Jehovah in this vision and also in the one recorded in the third chapter, continues and completes the long chain of ancient testimonies beginning in Genesis, to the existence of self-designations in the Godhead. (See the summary of the argument in Lange's *Genesis*, p. 386, or Keil *On Pent.*, i. 184, and Hengstenberg's *Christology*, i. 107 ff., iv. 285.) The view that this exalted personage was only a created angel through whom God issues and executes his commands, and who speaks and acts in God's name, was favored by Origen, defended by Augustine, adopted by Jerome and Gregory the Great, and has been maintained in our own day by some eminent critics; but it cannot displace what has been the almost universal doctrine of the early Church and of the great body of believers in all ages, namely, that this angel was the Old Testament form of the Logos of John, a being connected with the supreme God by unity of nature, but personally distinct from Him. The most frequent and plausible objection to the old view affirms that it unreasonably transfers the revelations of the later dispensation to the older, and introduces notions entirely foreign to Hebrew habits of thought. But the contrary is the case. The Old Testament records one stage in the progressive development of religious truth, and the New Testament another, and both correspond in the most striking manner to each other. Indeed, they present what is not found, is not claimed in any other book in the world, — a complete system of typical and antitypical institutions, events, and persons. This feature has been sometimes pressed to an extravagant extent, and applied where it has no real bearing. But its general correctness is admitted by all sober interpreters. This being so, if the trinity of the divine nature is plainly set forth in the New Testament, especially if the great revealer of the Father (John 1. 18) is emphasized by evangelists and apostles, is it not to be expected that a foreshadowing of so important a truth will be found in the elder Scriptures? Guided by such an analogy, it was neither uncritical nor rash for the Church to conclude that the being called the Angel of Jehovah, the Angel of his Presence, the Angel of the Covenant, in whom Jehovah puts his name, who is identified with Jehovah, who performs the peculiar works of Jehovah, and yet is in some sense distinct from Him, is the same divine person who is represented in the New Testament as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express type of his essence, the image of the invisible God; in whose face the glory of God shines, and in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

3. The intercession ascribed to our Lord in the Christian Scriptures was not only typified by a remarkable function of the high-priest on the great day of atonement, but was actually performed by the second person of the Godhead long before his incarnation. He was "the lamb slain before the foundation of the world;" and the merits of his priceless expiation could as well be availed of an-

tecedently as subsequently, and they were. In all the affliction of his people, he was afflicted, and his potential voice was habitually uttered for their relief. The returned exiles, who were laying again the groundwork of Judah's prosperity, were discouraged, not only by their scanty numbers and impoverished resources, but by the consciousness of their own and their fathers' sins. What claim had such as they upon the Holy One of Israel? The prophet draws aside the veil and discloses an Intercessor who had nothing to hinder Him from immediate access to the Most High, and the surest prospect of success. *How long, O Lord*, was the anxious refrain of many a distressed believer in former years; and ages afterward John heard the same importunate cry from the souls under the altar (Rev. vi. 10). Many a, time since, solitary sufferers, unable to penetrate the dark mysteries of Providence, waiting and watching for relief from sore burdens, have had the same exclamation wrung from their lips. What with them is a burst of impatience or the utterance of exhausted nature, on the lips of the uncreated angel is the calm reminder of Jehovah's gracious promises and eternal purpose. And his intercession being always "according to the will of God," is therefore always successful. "Good words, comforting words," soothe and cheer the tried believer, until those words are translated into deeds, and the weary length of the night is forgotten in the brightness of the dawn.

4. Forbearance is not forgiveness. To the outward observer in Zechariah's day it looked as if prosperity was all on the side of the heathen world. Quiet reigned in all quarters, and divine justice seemed asleep. But it was only the calm before the storm. God is eternal, and therefore never in haste, and ever slack as men count slowness. He can afford to wait. Kings and rulers take counsel together against Him and his Anointed; with malice and rage they help forward the affliction of Zion; but He that sitteth in the heavens laughs (Ps. ii. 4). "Who thought," said Luther, "when Christ suffered and the Jews triumphed, that God was laughing all the time?" Since He knows that his enemies cannot escape He suffers them to proceed long with impunity. Often He uses them as instruments to chastise his own people, but when the chastisement has been inflicted, He breaks the rod and casts it into the fire. The quiet of the old Persian world was soon broken by a succession of strokes which scattered and destroyed all the persecutors of the Church. But Zion lived and grew and extended, until she became the most potent factor in all human society; and to-day is lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes to fill the whole earth.

#### MOBILITICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**PRESENT:** The Church militant does not stand alone; there is always at its side the Church triumphant. (1.) It often appears to us as if it stood alone, and then we are misled either to despondency, as if our labor and hope were vain, or to self-confidence, as if the result depended upon our running or willing. (2.) But no, the Church triumphant stands at its side and watches while we sleep; and He who is its Head and ours, brings our prayers before the Father.

**MOON:** The hour of darkest desolation to the Church, and of highest triumph to her enemies, is often the very hour when God begins his work

of judgment on the one, and returning mercy on the other.

Calvin: When the servant of Ellaha saw not the chariots in the air, he became almost lost in despair; but his despair was instantly removed when he saw so many angels ready at hand for

help (2 Kings vi. 17); so whenever God declares that angels are ministers for our safety, He means to animate our faith. At the same time He does not send us to angels, but this one thing is enough, that when God is propitious all the angels have a care for our salvation.

## VISION II. THE FOUR HORNS AND FOUR SMITHS.

### CHAPTER I. 18-21.

**A. Four Horns which scattered the People of God (vers. 18, 19). B. Four Smiths which cast down these Horns (vers. 20, 21).**

18-19 And I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns. And I said to the angel that talked with me, What are these? And he said to me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And Jehovah showed me four smiths. And I said, What come these to do? And he said thus,<sup>1</sup> These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that<sup>2</sup> no man lifted up his head, but these are come to terrify them, to cast out<sup>3</sup> the horns of the nations which lifted up the horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

#### TAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 21. — *אֵלֶּה הַקֶּרֶנוֹת* is not an *אֵלֶּה* a nonrelative which would require a different construction, but to be rendered just as the same phrase is in ver. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 21. — *כִּי*, supply *אֲשֶׁר* — so that. This is a rare use of the form, but it is allowed by nearly all critics.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 21. — *יִדְּרוּ*. Prof. Cowley says that this word has the sense *cast down to the ground*, but none of the instances of its use (Jer. i. 14; Lam. iii. 63, etc.) will bear a stronger sense than *cast* or *cast out*.

#### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This vision carries forward the assurance given in the one before it, by showing the provision made for repelling the foes of the covenant people.

Ver. 1. I lifted up my eyes. After seeing the first vision, the Prophet had sank down in meditation. Again he raises his eyes, and behold, four horns. The horn is a common Scriptural symbol of strength, and in the prophecies usually represents a kingdom or political power. Do these four horns refer to just so many kings or empires which oppressed the covenant people? Not a few expositors answer in the affirmative, but they differ widely in the designation of these opposing powers. Cyril names Pul, Sargon, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar; Grotius, the Persian Kings, Alexander, Antiochus, and Ptolemy; Pressel, Assyria, Chaldaea, Egypt, and Persia; but the greater number refer to the four great empires predicted by Daniel, so Jerome, Kimchi, Hengstenberg, Keil, Baumgarten, Wordsworth. It is not a sufficient objection to this last view, to say with Henderson and Köhler, that of these powers two were not in existence at this time, and cannot have been spoken of, because the hostility described in the vision had already taken place; for the vision might very well have included the future as well as the past. A more serious objection is that each of these destroyed its predecessor, whereas in the vision the smiths are represented as distinct from the horns. And besides, neither the Persian nor

Alexander were enemies of the Jews. It is better, therefore, with the majority of interpreters (Theodoret, Calvin, Umbreit, Hualg, Maurer, Köhler), to refer the number four to the cardinal points of the compass, and thus make it include all possible enemies. — As a matter of fact the people of God had enemies on all sides, the Assyrian, Chaldean, and Samaritan on the north, the Egyptian on the south, Philistines on the west, and Moabites and Ammonites on the east. These foes scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, i. e., the twelve tribes in their completeness, with special mention for the sake of emphasis, of the capital city. The

objection to this founded upon the lack of *אֵלֶּה* before the last substantive (Keil) is of no force, as that sign of the definite object may be inserted or omitted at pleasure, Dent. xii. 6 (Green *H. G.*, § 270 h).

Ver. 20. The Prophet saw four smiths. The LXX. render *καρπηνοὶ*, whence our E. V., "carpenters." The Vulgate gives *fabri*, which corresponds exactly to the Hebrew, but in view of the work assigned to these persons, most expositors render the term *smiths*. No man lifted up his head — all were in an utterly prostrate condition. To scatter it — its inhabitants. The four smiths simply express the various powers which God raises up and employs to overthrow the agencies which are hostile to his people. There is no indication in the passage itself what these powers are, and there seems to be no need to seek information elsewhere. The point of the entire

vision lies in the coincidence of the numbers of the horns and the smiths. For every horn there was a smith to beat it down. The Church then could rest calmly in the assurance that every hostile power that rose in opposition should be judged and destroyed by the Lord. The primary reference was of course to the work of the Jews in restoring the city and completing the Temple, but this did not exhaust the meaning of this very simple but significant symbol. It had as wide a sweep as the corresponding verbal statement of Isaiah (liv. 17), "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Zion's God controls all persons and powers and events; and through the long tract of the Church's history it will be seen that for every evil there is a remedy, and for every enemy a deliverer. The horn will arise and do its work, but the smith will also appear and do his work.

It is worthy of observation that what the angel in ver. 19 calls "Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem," he calls in ver. 21 simply "Judah." So that here is a clear and indubitable proof, in the first part of the book whose post-exile origin is unquestioned, that Israel is used, not to denote distinctively the northern kingdom, but merely to round out the view of what was left of the entire covenant people after the restoration. This bears upon the similar use of "Israel" and "Ephraim" in the second part of these prophecies.

#### DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The Church of God on earth exists in the midst of conflict. There always have appeared horns which attempt to scatter it. A halcyon period sometimes is found like that mentioned in Acts ix. 31, "Then had the Churches [true text, Church] rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria," but its normal state is that of a struggle against numerous and mighty foes. The Saviour came not to send peace on earth but a sword. The carnal mind is enmity with God, and the flashing of truth upon an unregenerate conscience must needs provoke wrath. Hence the bloody tracks which so often occur in the records of the past. There has never been any considerable period since our Lord's ascension, in which persecution of his followers has not existed in some quarter of the earth. Even now it is found in the remote east, in the Turkish Empire and in the Baltic Provinces of Russia. True believers are tossed on the horns of furious foes. Their course lies through a storm to the haven, through a battle to the crown. Let them not "count it a strange thing" when even a fiery trial befalls them. Such an experience belongs to the fixed purpose of God.

2. Conflict does not mean defeat. The very same voice which announces the gory horn, sets

forth the agency which is to crush it. The character of this agency varies indefinitely. One horn may be used to destroy another horn, or a totally different instrument may be employed, but in either case the result is the same. Such an equilibrium between assault and defense is maintained that the Church is indestructible. One heathen ruler persecuted, another protected and restored. So in the conflicts of the early Church and of the Reformation, for every formidable horn there was found an equally formidable smith. Thus, too, in the organized attacks of Deism, Nationalism, and Scientific Atheism, at first the air was filled with the shouts of victory, but the rejoicing was premature. In every instance, the head of the Church raised up, sometimes in an unexpected quarter, a workman who needed not to be ashamed, who successfully vindicated the old truth and put to flight the armies of the alien.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

JAY: We see from this that the friends of Zion are as numerous as her foes; that her defense is equal to her danger; and that as the state of his people requires it, the Lord will seasonably raise up means and instruments for their succor and deliverance. The assurance may be derived from four principles: the love of God; the power of God; the faithfulness of God; the conduct of God. In the first we see that He must be inclined to appear for them as they are infinitely dear to Him. In the second, we see that He is able to do it. In the third, that He is engaged to do it, and his promise cannot be broken. In the fourth, that He always has done it, Scripture, history, and experience being witness.

Then let the world forbear their rage,  
The Church renounce her fear;  
Israel must live through every age,  
And be the Almighty's care.

CALVIN: The Prophet by asking the angel (ver. 19), sets before us the example of a truly teachable disposition. Though the Lord does not immediately explain his messages, there is no reason for us disdainfully to reject what is obscure as many do in our day, who complain that God's Word is ambiguous and extremely difficult. The Prophet although perplexed did not morosely turn away, but asked the angel. And though the angels are not nigh us or at least do not visibly appear, yet God can by other means afford us help when it is needed. He promises to give the Spirit of understanding and wisdom. If then, we do not neglect the word and sacraments, and especially if we ask for the guidance of the Spirit, there is nothing obscure or intricate in the prophecies which He will not make known so far as is necessary.

## VISION III. THE MAN WITH THE MEASURING LINE.

## CHAPTER II.

A. *A Man with a Measuring Line, and its Meaning* (vers. 1-5). B. *Further Promises* (vers. 6-13).

1 And I lifted up my eyes<sup>1</sup> and saw, and behold, a man, and in his hand a measuring-line. And I said, Whither goest thou? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its breadth and what its length. And behold the angel that talked with me came forth and another angel went forth to meet him, And said to him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall lie as open country<sup>2</sup> for the multitude of men and cattle in the midst of her.

- 5 And I will be to her, saith Jehovah, a wall of fire around,  
And for glory will I be in the midst of her.  
6 Ho! ho! flee out of the land of the north, saith Jehovah,  
For as<sup>3</sup> the four winds of heaven have I scattered you, saith Jehovah.  
7 Ho!<sup>4</sup> Zion, save thyself,  
Thou that dwellest with<sup>5</sup> the daughter of Babylon.  
8 For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
After glory hath He sent me to the nations that plundered you,  
For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple<sup>6</sup> of his<sup>7</sup> eye.  
9 For behold, I swing my hand over them,  
And they shall become a spoil to their own servants,  
And ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me.  
10 Shout and rejoice, O daughter of Zion,  
For, behold, I come, and dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah.  
11 And many nations shall join themselves<sup>8</sup> to Jehovah in that day,  
And become a people to me.  
And I will dwell in the midst of thee,  
And thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me to thee.  
12 And Jehovah shall take Judah as his portion in the holy land,  
And shall yet<sup>9</sup> choose Jerusalem.  
13 Be still, all flesh, before Jehovah,  
For He has risen up from his holy habitation.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1. — There is nothing in Hebrew to correspond to the "again" in the M. V.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 4. — פְּרוּזוֹת, lit. = *plains*, here denotes open level ground, in contrast with walled and fortified cities. See the full expression in Ezek. xxxviii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 6. — The various reading בּ in "כִּי" is sustained by a number of MSS. and the Vulgate, but is inferior to the Textus Receptus.

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 7. — This verse begins with the same interjection, הִנֵּה, which occurs at the beginning of the preceding verse and should be so rendered, and not confounded, as in the M. V., with the mere sign of the vocative.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 7. — עִמָּךְ, construed directly with the accusative, is found also to Ps. xlii. 4, 2 Sam. vi. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 8. — בִּבְרִית. The prevailing opinion derives this from בִּבְרִית or בְּרִית, and makes it = *covenant*, or *gate* to the eye, its centre-point.

<sup>7</sup> Ver. 8. — The reading עֵינֶי, though given in several MSS. and sustained by the Vulgate, appears to be due to a copyist's correction.

<sup>8</sup> Ver. 11. — The reflexive sense of the Niphal in נִלְוֶה is much more suitable and expressive than the simple passive.

<sup>9</sup> Ver. 12. — עוֹד, in the same connection, is 1. 17, is rendered in M. V. yet, while here it appears as again. It is better rendered yet in both places, the sense being not that God will make a new choice, but that He will demonstrate again in actual experience his old choice. Ps. lxxviii. 66, lxxviii. 2.



## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

As the second vision represented the destruction of Israel's foes, the third makes an advance by setting forth the enlargement and security of the Covenant people. (a.) Vers. 1-5 contain the symbol; (b.), vers. 6-13 the fuller explanation of its meaning, namely, the despoiling of the nations (vers. 6-9), the indwelling of Jehovah in Zion (ver. 10), and the ingathering of many nations (vers. 11-13).

(a.) *The Symbol and its General Sense* (vers. 1-5). Vers. 1, 2. And I lifted up my eyes. . . . what its length. The prophet sees a man with a measuring-line in his hand advancing upon the scene, and he asks whither he is going. The answer is that he is about to measure the length and breadth of Jerusalem. This man is not to be identified with the interpreting angel (Rosenmüller, Maurer, etc.), for the latter is plainly distinguished from him in ver. 3; nor does the passage furnish any reason for regarding him as the Angel of the Lord (Keil, Hengstenberg, etc.). He is rather simply a person introduced to perform the symbolical action of the vision, and having done this, he passes out of view. His mission is to ascertain by measurement the present size of Jerusalem, with a view to its prospective indefinite enlargement. This view is not stated by him, but is clearly to be inferred from ver. 4, and the general tenor of the chapter.

Ver. 3. After the measuring angel has gone away to do his office, behold, *i. e.*, the prophet sees "the angel that talked with me" coming forth, *i. e.*, from the back-ground of the scene, and probably, as Köhler suggests, from this direction in which the measuring angel had disappeared. Before, however, the interpreting angel can either address or be addressed by the prophet, he is met by a third angel coming from the opposite direction. The character of this third angel is not further described, but from the tone of authority, "Run, speak," etc., and from vers. 8, 9, it seems not unlikely that he is the Angel of the Lord (Neumann, Pressel, etc.). There are no data for a positive opinion.

Ver. 4. And said to him. The subject here can only be, whether grammatically or logically, the third angel. His direction tells the *angelus interpretis* to do just what his function required. This young man = the prophet himself, as most of the earlier and later expositors conceive. Zechariah is thus styled because of his age, and not, as Jerome, Vitrinus, and Hengstenberg think, because of his subordinate relation to the angels, which is nowhere else thus expressed. Run, because it is good news. The substance of the good news is that Jerusalem is to have a vast influx of men and cattle, so that it shall no longer be confined by narrow walls and fixed limits, but be spread out like the open country. Cf. Is. xlix. 19, 20.

Ver. 5. And I will be to her, etc. But it might be feared that great danger would result from this unwall'd extension. This is met by the promise that Jehovah would be a wall of fire around, perhaps in allusion to the pillar of fire in the wilderness (cf. Is. iv. 5). The fire would consume every invader. There should be, however, not only protection without, but glory within. This splendor is to arise from the manifested presence of God (cf. Is. lx. 19). The full force of this promise is to be gathered from the following verses.

(b.) *Fuller Explanation of the Symbol* (vers. 6-13).

Vers. 6, 7. He, ho, flee out . . . daughter of Babylon. An assurance of Jehovah's presence and blessing with his people is given in the announcement of judgment upon Babylon; and this is expressed very strikingly in the form of a summons to the Jews still remaining in the Chaldean capital to flee away in haste lest they should be overtaken by the coming storm. There were, no doubt, many Jews who, because of age or infirmities or ties of property, preferred to remain in Babylon rather than risk the hardships of the restoration; but the call of the text seems intended not so much for their benefit as to show to the depending people in Palestine how severe a blow impended over their former oppressors. Land of the north. Babylon was so called because armies and caravans coming thence to Jerusalem entered the Holy Land from the north. For as the four winds, etc., assigns the reason why such a return was possible. God had scattered Israel not to the four winds, but as itself, *i. e.*, with a violence and fury such as would result from the combined force of all the winds of heaven. Keil's explanation of *וּפָנָה* as = a beneficent diffusion, is not sustained by the usage of the verb, and is against the context. *Hol Zion!* etc. Zion stands for the inhabitants of Zion, *i. e.*, the people of God, who are now still dwelling with the daughter of Babylon, *i. e.*, the people of that city personified as a woman (Ps. ix. 14, cxxxvii. 8).

Vers. 8, 9. Farther reason of the call to flee from Babylon. After glory. Gesenius, Maurer, and others strangely construe this, *Ha hoth sent me after glory*, in the sense of with a view to acquire it. This is quite inadmissible, not because *אֲחֵרֵי* is not used as a preposition (Mure), for it is often so employed, but because it is never construed with a verb of motion in this sense, and the verb in the text has its appropriate object and preposition immediately following. We must therefore, following the LXX. and the Vulgate, render "after glory" = after the bestowment of the glory stated in ver. 5. The speaker was sent to these plundering nations to execute God's judgments upon them. The reason for this mission is announced in the last clause of the verse by a beautiful and touching image, borrowed from Ps. xvii. 8; cf. Deut. xxxii. 10. The apple, literally, the gate, through which light enters the eye, hence = pupil. The pupil or apple of the eye is a proverbial type of that which is at once most precious and most easily injured, and which therefore has a double claim to the most careful protection. The pronominal suffix *his* is to be referred to Jchprah, and not to the enemy himself.

Ver. 9. For, behold . . . servants, furnishes an additional explanation of the sending after glory. The Angel of the Lord would swing his hand (cf. Is. xl. 16, xlv. 16), as a gesture of menace or a symbol of miraculous power, over the nations, so that they should become — *נְטִילָה* expresses consequence — a spoil to the Israelites, who had before been obliged to serve them. A close parallel is found in Is. xlv. 2. And ye shall know . . . sent me. By the execution of this judgment it would be made clear to Israel that Jehovah had sent his angel. They would know the fact not only by faith, but by experience.

Vers. 10-12. The people are summoned to rejoice over the Lord's indwelling and its happy result. Behold, I come. The glorification is about to commence. Jehovah comes to Zion to take up

his abode, and this is the pledge of all conceivable blessedness. The close resemblance of the language used here to that in ch. ix. 9, suggests that both refer to the same form of Jehovah's tabernacling with men, namely, the incarnation. Even Klunchi refers the passage to "future events in the times of the Messiah." This is further confirmed by the next verse. And many nations, etc. "The Kingdom of God, instead of being confined to Israel, will be enlarged by the reception of numerous heathen peoples (ch. viii. 20, 21; Is. li. 3, xvi. 1; Micah iv. 2). The two latter clauses of this verse are emphatic repetitions of what has been said in the same words in vers. 9, 10.

Ver. 12. And Jehovah will take, etc. The speaker reverts to the ancient declaration, Deut. xxxii. 9, "Jehovah's portion is his people, Jacob the lot of his inheritance," and announces its complete fulfillment through the coming of the Lord. The holy land is of course, Palestine, but only in the first instance. Wherever the people of God are found, there is the holy land. Israel is to overflow by the large additions made to it, so that its original territory will be too small. The new aggregate shall inherit all the blessings promised to the original chosen nation. The same thought is conveyed in the other member of the parallelism:

Ver. 13 furnishes a sublime close to the chapter. Be still . . . habitation. All flesh is summoned to wait in reverential silence the coming of the Lord to his work, and the reason assigned is that it is soon to begin. For Jehovah has risen up from his holy habitation, which is heaven (cf. Deut. xxvi. 15; 2 Chron. xxx. 27). Illustrative parallels of the sentiment are found in Ps. lxxvi. 8, 9: "The earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth," and Zeph. i. 7: "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is at hand." Here the contrast is emphatic between men, even all of them, who are but *flesh*, and the everliving Jehovah. Calvin thinks that the temple rather than heaven is meant by the holy habitation, and that the point is, that even from that desolated place, exposed to the derision of the ungodly, God would come forth to judgment. But it is better to adhere to the usual meaning of the expression, and to understand the contrast as being between God rising up in heaven, and all flesh on the earth. The divine majesty has seemed to be asleep, but now it is roused up; let men therefore beware.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. Pressel justly remarks that although at first view this vision appears to resemble those which were received by Ezekiel (xl. 3 ff.), and John (Rev. xi. 1), yet in reality it is very different. In the latter cases the imagery seems to have a fixed and definite meaning, however difficult it may be to ascertain and state that meaning; in the former the symbolical action is of the simplest kind, and serves merely to give vividness to the subsequent oral statement. Whether a house or a city is to be enlarged, the first step is to make an adequate survey of the existing buildings. The divine condescension uses this preliminary measurement outwardly represented, as a token of a future indefinite expansion which would leave the surveyor's lines far in the rear as a thing of the past. The entire chapter is an admirable illustration of the germinal nature of prophecy. In its primary

aspect it met directly the situation of the Prophet's contemporaries and animated them to new zeal and hope in their endeavors to restore the national capital, and reestablish the former civil and ecclesiastical institutions. Yet it manifestly cannot be restricted to this. The incorporation of many nations with the Jews, as set forth in ver. 11, had no counterpart in the actual experience of the Jewish commonwealth as such. It was fulfilled only in the rapid and general diffusion of the Gospel by which multitudes of the heathen were turned from dumb idols to serve the living God. Yet the prophet passes without a break from the narrower to the larger scope of his prediction. They to whom it was first given may have found it difficult to see the exact nexus of events; but to us who live at a time when Providence has interpreted promise, it is easy to trace the way in which the Spirit leads Zechariah from a temporary act of consolation to a declaration which sets forth one of the chief glories of Messiah's blessed reign. The narrow walls of the Mosaic forms were to be thrown down, and the church's limits extended to those who were then far beyond those boundaries. Moore speaks of it as at least a curious coincidence that when this enlargement did take place the centres of population were the first to experience the blessing, and so the dwellers in villages (*paganis*) became synonymous with those who still remained in heathenism; but at last the Gospel reached and converted those very *paganos* (*pagans*); and then in very deed Jerusalem inhabited the villages or was spread out as the open country.

2. The twofold blessing of Jehovah to his Church. Nowhere even in Scripture is this set forth with so much beauty and force as in the concise statement that He is a wall of fire without and a glory within. What deep moats or massive walls or elaborate defenses are comparable to a circle of flame, fed by no human hands, ensuring destruction to the assailant before he can even reach the presence of those he seeks to attack! The Psalmist uses a striking figure when he says (cxv. 2), "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." But the hills which arose around Jerusalem might be scaled, or commanded from a still higher elevation. Not so with devouring fire; that is an impassable barrier. The promise then is complete; all that is needed is faith to appropriate it. As Luther says, "If we were surrounded by walls of steel and fire, we would feel secure, and defy the devil. But the property of faith is not to be proud of what the eye sees but of what the word reveals." The one prayer suitable for times of darkness or despondency, is that of the disciples, *Lord, increase our faith.*

But the assurance of Jehovah is not only for outward, but also for inward wants, and that in a most remarkable and comprehensive way. He Himself will be for a glory within. As the Psalmist says, God is in the midst of her. Zion's true boast is not in buildings or services, in music or eloquence, in numbers or popularity, but in the manifested presence of her great Head. If his Holy Spirit reveal his power in cheering the bowed down, in sanctifying the afflicted, in quickening penitence, prayerfulness, holy living, and the usual expressions of a gracious character, in calling down sinners from their living tombs, in elevating the general tone of piety, in renewing the lost image in which man was originally created, then there is

glory far, far beyond what earth can give. The Psalmist said (ciii. 16), "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He will appear in glory." We may reverently reverse the clauses, and affirm that when He appears in glory, Zion shall be built up. Let Him come when He will and as He will, his presence is enough.

3. God's people are unspeakably dear to Him. They are like the apple of his eye. He chooses them as his portion, He guards them as his jewels. The pupil of the eye is peculiarly delicate and sensitive. It is not necessary to pierce it with a knife to make the owner shrink; a mote, or even a touch will startle and grieve. So the blessed Lord looks toward those whom He has chosen and called. In all their affliction He is afflicted. When Jesus remonstrated with Saul of Tarsus for his furious enmity toward the infant Church, the language was, "Why persecutest thou me?" Every blow, struck at the least or humblest member of the body, reaches its invisible but glorious head. In like manner whatever is done for the people of God is regarded by God as done for Himself. He "is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister" (Heb. vi. 10). This is not the estimate of the world at large. They look down upon believers as deluded visionaries, or at best amiable enthusiasts, while sometimes the carnal heart finds expression in much harsher terms. So much the more necessary is it to remember the Lord's judgment in the case, and to feel and act toward those who bear the Christian name and walk accordingly, as to those who, whatever their outward surroundings, are loved by their Lord with an affection beyond what even a mother bears to the son of her womb.

The whole history of the Church is a ennument upon this utterance. From the time of its institution in the household of Abraham, when latent in Egypt, wandering in the desert, militant in Canaan, triumphant in Jerusalem, captive in Babylon, oppressed under the Syrians and Romans, it was sustained by heavenly food, by visions and inspirations, by miracles and portents, by God's effective support on the right hand and the left. Afterwards, when revived and renewed by the personal ministry and blessed sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, it was brought into still closer fellowship with the Most High, fitted for unlimited diffusion, proclaimed to all the world, and established alike among the loftiest and the lowliest of the earth. And though tried in every possible way by malice and envy, it was only purged by suffering, confirmed and rooted by the storms of persecution, and protected against all the powers of earth and hell by an arm which even the blind may see belongs to none but the living God.

4. The introduction of *notions* into the fellowship of the people of God is one of the grand peculiarities of the later dispensation. In earlier days the Church was far less restrictive than it is often supposed to have been. Not a few outside of the chosen line obtained entrance to the community. Not only Habbah and Rahab, and Ruth, and Gittai, but many others found a home in Zion; still in all cases they were required to leave their original home, to forget their father's house, and transplant themselves to the seat of the theocracy. But now the good news goes to the heathen instead of their coming to it. The various tribes and families whom God so carefully separated (Acts xvii. 26), although they were of one blood,

still retain their distinct national existence, but on receiving the Gospel are counted as seed of the promise. A very remarkable Psalm (lxxxvii. 4) speaks of these collective bodies as subjects of regeneration: "I will mention Habbah and Babilon as knowing me. Lo, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia: (As to each of these it shall be said,) This one was born there." These ruling powers among the heathen, most of them hereditary enemies of Israel, are given as samples of the whole Gentile world. Not individuals alone, but whole nations are to experience a spiritual birth, and in consequence join themselves to Jehovah. Not by force of outward compulsion, but by the power of an inward conviction. The flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth with goos will (or of their own accord) ascend the altar of Jehovah (Is. lx. 7). It is of course true that conversions are effected individually and not en masse, but these are to be so multiplied that a little one becomes a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. The history of modern missions has furnished repeated instances in which a whole people has been revolutionized and made as distinctively Christian as it before had been heathen. It needs only a farther development of divine grace in the same direction to fill out in reality the most glowing pictures sketched on the prophetic canvass.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**PRESEEL:** A fine illustration of the defense which Jehovah is to his people is furnished in the experience of a widow who alone with her daughter occupied a house standing by itself in the direct way of the Russian army on its march to Schleswick; and comforted her weeping, despairing daughter with the assurance that the Lord could and would protect them from all harm. The same night a heavy fall of snow so covered all approaches to the house that when the army marched on the next day it was not visited or apparently seen by even one of the licentious soldiery. A wall of snow was as effectual as a wall of fire.

**MOORE:** The true glory of the Church is not in any external pomp or power of any kind. Her outward rites and ceremonies, therefore, should only be what the earth's atmosphere is to the rays of the sun, — a pure, transparent medium of transmission.

— Delay of punishment is no proof of impunity. God often seems asleep when He is only awaiting the appointed time; but in the end, when all seems as it was from the foundation of the world, the herald cry shall go forth; He silent, O earth, for Jehovah is roused to his terrible work, and the day of his wrath is come.

**JAY:** If God regards his people so kindly and is so jealous for their welfare (Jer. 6), it becomes them on the other hand to be equally concerned for his cause and his glory. We are to regard his Word as we keep the tenderest part of the tenderest member of our body. He says, "Keep my commandments and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye" (Prov. vii. 2).

**HOBAN:** I will dwell in the midst of thee (Isa. 63, 10, 11). God is said to dwell wherever He specially and permanently manifests his presence. And since He thus specially and permanently manifests his presence in his people collectively and individually, He is said to dwell to all and in each. . . . The human soul is said to be full of God when its inward state, its affections

and acts are determined and controlled by Him, and blessed. . . . There is unspeakably more in the promises of God than we are able to understand. Then it is pure, and glorious, and free, stand.

## VISION IV. JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST BEFORE THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH.

### CHAPTER III. 1-10.

A. *Joshua accused by Satan; but forgiven* (vers. 1-5). B. *A Promise of Protection to the High Priest, and also of the coming of Branch and its blessed Results* (vers. 6-10).

1 And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of Jehovah,  
2 and Satan<sup>1</sup> standing at his right hand to oppose him.<sup>2</sup> And Jehovah said to Satan,  
Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan, even Jehovah who chooses<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem rebuke thee!  
3 Is not this a brand plucked from the fire? And Joshua was clothed in filthy garments,  
4 and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake to those who stood before him, saying. Take the filthy garments away from him, and he said to him,  
5 See, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from<sup>4</sup> thee, and will clothe thee with festal raiment. And I said,<sup>5</sup> Let them put a clean<sup>6</sup> mitre upon his head; and they put the clean mitre upon his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of Jehovah was standing by.

6 And the angel of Jehovah testified<sup>6</sup> to Joshua, and said,

7 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
If thou wilt walk in my ways and keep my charge,  
Thou shalt judge my house, and also keep my courts,  
And I will give thee access<sup>7</sup> among these standing here.

8 Hear, I pray, O Joshua the high priest,  
Thou and thy colleagues<sup>8</sup> who sit before thee,  
For men of wonder<sup>9</sup> are they,  
For, behold, I bring my servant, Branch.

9 For, behold the stone which I have laid before Joshua;  
Upon one stone are seven eyes;  
Behold I execute its carving;<sup>10</sup>  
And I remove the iniquity of this land in one day.

10 In that day saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
Ye shall invite every man his neighbor  
Under the vine and under the fig tree.

### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1. — השטן לשטנו. The force of this antanaclassis can hardly be expressed in a version — the opposer to oppose him fails to convey the force of the proper name Satan.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 2. — בחר not as E. V. who "has chosen," but according to the force of the participle, who how and habitually chooses. Henderson with a marvelous lack of taste substitutes for the simple meaning, "taketh delight."

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 4. — "From thee," *lit.*: from upon thee. The guilt or punishment of sin is conceived as a burden resting upon the sinner until forgiveness removes it.

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 5. — For רחם Ewald, following the Targum, Peshito, and Vulgate, proposes to read רחם, and Henderson רחם. But on general principles the Masoretic text is to be preferred, and especially here, where the motive of the change is obvious, and nothing is gained in clearness or emphasis by departing from the Hebrew.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 5. — כהן. The E. V. "fair," besides being a needless departure from the meaning of the word, fails to express the point involved in cleanness as the emblem of purity or forgiveness.

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 6. — וידע, a strong term, implying the importance and the certainty of the communication.

<sup>7</sup> Ver. 7. — "Access," *lit.*, ways, i. e., means of free ingress and egress among my immediate attendants. See Ring and Critical.



9 Ver. 3. — **חֲבֵרֵי** — companions, but as it is associates in office who are intended, colleagues seems the nearest equivalent.

10 Ver. 3. — **סוֹמְרִים** is rendered *wonder* (H. V. margin), to preserve its original signification. Perhaps "men of omens" would be more easily understood.

11 Ver. 3. — **לִפְתָּח פְּתָחַיִם** *lit.*, to open openings — to carve.

### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL

The third vision lays a sure foundation for the glowing assurances and promises contained in those which precede by revealing the fact of the divine forgiveness. Sin had been the cause of all the previous troubles of Israel, and its continuance would bring them all back. Hence the need and value of the great truth expressed in the dramatic form and rich symbolism of this vision. The first half of the chapter (vers. 1-5) represents the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah and opposed by Satan; but Joshua is forgiven, — a fact which is both literally stated and also symbolically represented. In the second half (vers. 6-10), the high priest is assured of present protection, and of the future appearance of the Branch, who will remove sin at once and bestow the fullness of salvation.

(a.) The Symbol (vers. 1-5). Ver. 1. And he showed me. The subject of the verb is Jehovah, as appears from the fact that He is the last person previously mentioned, and from the parallel phrase in 1:20. It is not necessary to suppose that it is a judicial scene (Hoffman, Ewald, Köhler, Pressel) which is presented to the Prophet's view. So far as the terms used are concerned, they will apply equally well to the high priest's appearance before God in the discharge of his official functions. To "stand before Jehovah" was the technical term to denote the ordinary service of the priests (Deut. x. 8; 2 Chron. xxix. 11; Judg. xx. 28; Ezek. xlv. 15). The presumption then is that he was here not for himself only, but also and chiefly on behalf of the people, as their representative. That he was engaged in prayer is implied in the circumstances, and also in the description of Jehovah's words in ver. 4 as an answer. But another person appears on the scene who is called Satan, *lit.*, the adversary. Some (Kinchel, Ewald) refer this to a human adversary, such as Sennacherib, but the emphatic form of the term; its analogy to *ὁ ἐχθρὸς* (1 Pet. v. 8) and *ὁ κατήρυς* (Rev. xii. 10); the LXX.'s equivalent *ἐχθρὸς*; and the occurrence of the word in Job i. ii.; all point to the chief of the evil spirits as the person here intended. He is said to stand on the right hand of Joshua, not because this was the position appropriated by Jewish usage to an accuser, for no such usage can be, or at least has been, established; but because this is the most suitable place for one who wishes to impede or oppose another (Job xxx. 12; Ps. cix. 6). Satan's object is to oppose Joshua. The manner is not specifically stated, but from the next verse it seems as if Satan's work was to dwell upon the sins of the high priest and his people, and upon this ground urge their condemnation and overthrow.

Ver. 2. And Jehovah said. Almost all expositors agree that the angel of Jehovah is the Speaker here who takes the name of Jehovah because of the intimate and mysterious relation he sustains to Him. There is no debate between the parties, but the adversary is at once repelled with indignation. Jehovah rebukes thee! Instead of

damaging others, he secures his own overthrow. The emphatic repetition of the exclamation indicates the certainty of Satan's failure. The other words of the verse show the ground of this failure. It is not at all in the innocence of the high priest or the people, but in the gracious purpose of Jehovah. He chooses Jerusalem, and that choice must stand. This is further confirmed by the question, Is not this a brand . . . fire? cf. Amos iv. 11. Most expositors, ancient and modern, refer this to the exile in which Joshua had suffered, but from which he had been restored. God had rescued him for preservation not for destruction. Having snatched the brand from the flames, he did not mean to throw it back into the fire. The reference of course is to the high priest, not so much in his personal, as his representative character.

Ver. 3. Clothed with filthy garments. Eichhorn, Ewald, *et al.*, consider this soiled raiment designed to set forth that he was an accused person, but this is arbitrarily to transfer a Roman custom (Liv. ii. 54) to the East where not a trace of it is to be seen. In Hebrew usage such garments represent sin. Is. lxiv. 5: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses as filthy rags." Surely as the nation had been chastised, its iniquity was not wiped away. The last clause is not a superfluous repetition of what is stated in ver. 1, but indicates a patient expectancy in Joshua, that notwithstanding Satan's accusation, relief would come.

Ver. 4. And he answered, *i. e.*, the prayer for forgiveness involved in the fact of the high priest's appearing before the Lord. Vitringa says (on Zech. i. 11), "In every case in which **אָמַן** or *ἀντιπρὸς* is placed at the opening of a speech or narrative without any question preceding it, there is always a question tacitly assumed; just as in the Books of Scripture, where they commence with the copula, some antecedent is always supposed to exist, with which the narrative or speech is tacitly contrasted, even though nothing at all has gone before." Those who stood before him = surely not, as Ewald maintains, the friends of the accused, but the Lord's own servants, the angels. These are ordered to remove the filthy garments, and then the angel of Jehovah explains the meaning of the symbolical act. I have taken, *etc.* This does not refer to sanctification (Mark), but to forensic forgiveness. The two cases (2 Sam. xli. 13 and xlv. 10) establish this as the meaning of the phrase, **הִכְבִּיר אֵין**. The festal garments may symbolize innocence (Chaldee), or joy (Köhler, Pressel), or glory (Keil).

Ver. 5. And I said. At this point the Prophet who had been only a silent spectator, comes suddenly forward with a prayer for the completion of the work begun, and says, Let them put . . . head. It cannot be made out that any special significance attached to the mitre or turban, and the emphasis must lie upon the qualifying word *clean*. "The turban can be referred to only as an article of dress which would be the first to strike the eye"

(Hengstenberg). The wish of the Prophet was at once complied with. The last clause of the verse does not mean that the angel of the Lord rose up from his seat (Henderson, Köhler, Pressel), but that he continued standing by, "like a master presiding over the ceremony, approving and adorning it with his presence" (C. H. Mich.).

(b.) The Promise (vers. 6-10). The completion of the symbolical action is made the occasion of a further and far-reaching assurance, addressed to the high priest and through him to the nation.

Ver. 6. Testified = made a solemn declaration (Gen. xlii. 3; Dent. viii. 19).

Ver. 7 contains a promise with a condition. The condition is partly personal — **walk in my ways**, and partly official — **keep my charge**. The promise is altogether official. **Judges . . . courts** = administer the service in the holy place and guard the house of God from all idolatry and ungodliness. "This is here represented not as a duty but as a reward; inasmuch as activity in connection with the kingdom of God is the highest honor and greatest favor which God can confer upon any mortal" (Hengstenberg). The last clause contains an important additional promise.

**מְהֻלָּלִים** is a difficult word which occurs nowhere else. (1.) Some take it as a noun, plural

of **מְהֻלָּל** = ways, i. e., ingress and egress, denoting a peculiarly free access to God among his heavenly servants (Calvin, Hitzig, Maurer, Ewald, Köhler, Fürst, etc.). (2.) Others regard it as a

Chaldee form of the Piel participle of **הָלַךְ**, taken intransitively = walkers, i. e., angels who as messengers go between the high priest and Jehovah (LXX, Vulg., Pesh., Grotius, Baumgarten). (3.) Others derive it from the Hiphil participle of the same verb, meaning = leaders or guides (Luther, Gesen., Heng., Ussener, Dr. Riggs, etc.). Against the last two is the circumstance that Zechariah could very well have expressed that sense in regular Hebrew form; that they require an alteration of the text; and that **וְהָלַכְתִּי** is required to be rendered as = **וְהָלַכְתִּי**. I hesitatingly prefer the first.

One thing is certain, that some kind of association or influence with God's immediate servants on high is here promised to the high priest.

Ver. 8. Hear, I pray, etc. This opening calls attention to the importance of what follows. The address is made not only to Joshua, but to his colleagues, i. e., associates in the priestly office. The next clause assigns the reason for including them. They are men of wonder, i. e., men who excite wonder in others, and thus attracting attention to themselves, become types of what is to come (cf. Is. viii. 18; xx. 3; Ezek. xii. 6; xxiv. 24-27 (Heb.)). The constant exercise of priestly functions in the offering of sacrifices which had no intrinsic efficacy was a perpetual testimony of man's need of forgiveness and of God's purpose in future to satisfy the need thus made known. The objection to this view on the ground that we should expect *are ye* and not *are they*, is removed by the fact that such cases of enallage are not rare (cf. Zeph. ii. 12 (in Heb.)). The reason why these typical men, Joshua and his priests, are summoned to listen, is given in the next clause, which declares that Jehovah will bring forward that antitype whose appearance would show that their typical character was founded in truth. **My servant Branch**. The antitype is described by two names taken from the earlier Prophets. One, *servant* is of frequent

occurrence in Isaiah (xlii. 1, etc.), and also in Ezek. (xxxiv. 23, 24). The other, *branch*, occurs in Jeremiah xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15, — passages which plainly lean upon Isaiah's statements xl. 1, lii. 2. The term denotes the original obscurity of this personage and the gradual development of his character. Instead of being a tall and stately tree, he is a mere branch or root-shoot. This reference had become so well understood in Zechariah's time that he uses the word as if it were a proper name, my servant Branch. That it pointed to the Messiah is admitted by the Chald. Par., and almost all expositors, ancient and modern. The suggestion of a few (Kimchi, Theodoret, Grotius, Mayney), that Zerubbabel was intended, is refuted by the fact that the Branch had not yet appeared, while Zerubbabel had; and also by the consideration that this civil governor had nothing to do with the priestly office and could not possibly be an antitype of its holders. A similar figurative description of the Messiah is found in Ezek. xvii. 22, 23. The Lord, having described the royal house of Judah as a strong and lofty cedar, which had been plucked up by the roots and left to wither and die, declares that He will take from its summit a slender twig and plant it on the mountain of the height of Israel, where the little acorn shall take root, and grow, and spread, until it commands universal admiration. Every tree of the field shall own its superiority, and every fowl of heaven seek its shelter.

Ver. 9. For behold . . . seven eyes. This verse assigns the reason for the fulfillment of the preceding promise. The condition of the covenant people was so deplorable that it seemed vain to expect such a blessing as the coming of the Messiah. To countervail such despondency, Jehovah of Hosts assures his people of the watchful and loving care which will secure the gracious result. The single stone is not the Messiah (early interpreters, Kliefoth), for he was not "laid before Joshua;" nor the foundation stone of the Temple (Bosenmüller, Hitzig, Neumann, Henderson), which had long since been laid; nor the top-stone (Maurer), nor the plummet (Grotius), nor a jewel of the high priest's breast-plate (Theodoret, Baumgarten, etc.); but the covenant people now appropriately described as lying before Joshua, who was their ecclesiastical leader. It is no objection to this view that the Messiah is elsewhere spoken of as a stone (Is. exviii. 22; 1 Pet. ii. 7), for sometimes the head and the body both have the same term applied to them, as in Isaiah's use of the term *servant*, where only the context can determine which of the two is meant (Is. xlii. 2; lii. 13). The seven eyes may denote, either the all-embracing providence of God, or (according to the statement in Rev. v. 6 of the seven eyes of the Lamb which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth) the seven-fold radiations of the Spirit of Jehovah, by which the stone is preserved and prepared for its glorious destination. I see no reason why both may not be combined. According to this view, the eyes are not engraved on the stone, but directed toward it (cf. Ps. xxii. 8; Jer. xxxix. 12 for this use of **לֵב**).

Ewald (*Geschichte d. V. I.* iv. 239) sees in this verse a distinct evidence of Zoroastrian ideas. He says the conception of the seven eyes of Jehovah was derived from the Persian notion of the seven Amshaspands who surround the throne of the Supreme, and adds as a note that the upper servants of a great king were often called his eyes

and his ears. How far-fetched is this? The Hebrews were familiar with the term eyes of God or Jehovah, and meant by it just what all men mean by it; and the number seven had for ages been well known to them as a symbol of sacredness and completeness. See the excursus at the end of this section. The passage is perfectly intelligible on the supposition that Zechariah had never even heard of such a thing as the seven Amshaspands of the Zens-avesta. Execute its calling—make it a beautiful and costly stone. So must expositors from Calvin to Pressel. The last clause completes the brilliant promise. This land, i. e., the land of Israel, which of course includes its inhabitants, and they stand for the whole Church of which they were then the representatives. The guilt is to be removed in one day, which can hardly be any other than the great day of atonement at Golgotha. The phrase is analogous to the "once for all" in Hebrews vii. 27, x. 10. It presents a contrast between the continually repeated sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood and the one final and effectual sacrifice of the Messiah.

Ver. 10. *Ye shall invite . . . fig tree.* The result of this is expressed in a proverbial phrase borrowed from the older Scriptures, where it first occurs in the description of the happy period under Solomon (1 Kings iv. 25). "Whether it is to be taken literally or spiritually here has been much contested, the Rabbins favoring the former view, the Fathers the latter. We rightly combine both, and maintain that this picture of peaceful prosperity and cordial union is realized, although imperfectly, yet just as far as Christ's kingdom has its proper influence and the communion of saints is felt." (Pressel).

The entire vision and promise were admirably adapted to elicit their end. The high priest conquers his fierce antagonist, is assured of his forgiveness and confirmed in his office, and is certified of the continuance of the people until the appearance of the long expected Branch, who once for all and forever would take away the guilt and punishment of sin.

*The Number Seven.* The question why the eyes spoken of in ver. 9, whatever their meaning, should be stated as seven, brings up for consideration the peculiar significance of this number. Its employment here and in the next chapter (ver. 2, seven lamps and seven pipes, ver. 10, those seven), are instances of a usage at once very ancient and very wide spread. Leaving out of view the literature of India, Persia, and Arabia, we find in Scripture an extraordinary frequency of its occurrence. Seven, seventh, and sevenfold are found in the Old Testament and the New, not less than three hundred and eighty-three times, while a similar enumeration of the instances in which six and eight are used, reaches the sum of only one hundred and seventy-six, or less than one half of the sevens. This usage begins with the first book of the Bible and ends only with the last. We find in Genesis the seven days of creation; seven-fold vengeance denounced for Cain; clean beasts and fowls received into the ark by sevens; the dove despatched from the ark at intervals of seven days; Jacob serving seven years for a wife he did not want, and seven more for the wife he did want; and seven fat kine and seven lean, seven good ears and seven thin, representing the seven years of plenty and famine. In the Mosaic ritual, many sacrifices required seven victims, and often the blood was required to be sprinkled seven times. Not only the seventh day

was holy, but the seventh week of the year (a week of weeks); and the seventh month; and the seventh or Sabbatical year; and the Jubilee or the year following seven weeks of years, were all marked by festival observances. Jericho was overthrown by a march of the people seven successive days around the walls, headed by seven priests who blew as many trumpets. On the seventh day the circuit was made seven times, and then at the shout of the people the walls fell. Samson gave the Philistines of Timnath seven days to solve his riddle, he was bound with seven withes, and his seven locks were woven with the web. Seven years of famine were inflicted in Elisha's time, and the same offered as an alternative to David. The Psalmist praised God seven times a day, the just man falls seven times and rises again, Nebuchadnezzar's furnace was heated seven times more than it was wont. In the Apocalypse, the recurrence is still more marked. A condensed summation reports that there are two sevens in the introduction, namely, seven churches and seven spirits, and in the body of the work two sevens of sevens, namely, first, seven ecclesiasticks, stars, seals, horns, eyes, trumpets, thunders; and secondly, seven angels, heads, crowns, plagues, vials, mountains, kings.

Of the fact that this number is exceedingly prominent there can be no question. The precise ground of the prominence is not so easily stated. The late Professor Hadley, from whose article<sup>1</sup> on the subject our statement is drawn, enumerated five different theories. One is the Arithmetical, used by Philo the Jew, and based upon the peculiar property of seven as compared with any other of the digits. A second, the Chronological, is founded upon the early division of time into weeks. A third, the Symbolic, conceives seven to be the union of two numbers, namely, three, which symbolizes the divine, since the Godhead is a trinity, and four, which symbolizes the cosmic, the created universe of space, this being determined by the four cardinal points of the compass. The seven then represents that renovation of the world with God, which is the great aim and crowning consummation of all true religion. A fourth is the Physiological theory, tracing the preëminence of the seven to the fact that there are seven parts of the body, namely, the head, chest, and loins, with the four limbs; and seven openings of the head, namely, the three pairs of eyes, ears, and nostrils, with the mouth; and farther; that the seventh, fourteenth, and twenty-first days are critical periods in diseases. The fifth hypothesis is based on Astronomical reasons. The nocturnal heavens offered to the men of primitive times a constant and impressive spectacle. Here they could not but be struck by the seven members of the planetary system, as well as by the fact that the fixed stars exhibited the same number in several of the most brilliant constellations, e. g., the Great Bear or Charles' Wain, the *Septentriones* of the Romans; the Lesser Bear with its remarkable pole-star; the Pleiades with their "sweet influences," and the Hyades, whose frequent rains "vex the sea."

Upon the whole, in view of the antiquity of the usage and the character of the early Hebrews, it seems most natural to trace their sense of its sacredness and completeness to its original associations with the times and means of religious worship.

<sup>1</sup> *Essays Philological and Critical*. New York, 1872.

## DOCTRINAL AND MORAL.

1. This chapter contains one of the passages in the Old Testament in which the great spiritual adversary of God and man is spoken of under the name Satan. The other places are 1 Chron. xxi. 1 and the prologue to the book of Job. (The word *שָׂטָן* occurs also in 2 Sam. xix. 23 and Ps. cix. 6, but it is extremely doubtful whether it is used in these passages in any other than an appellative sense = adversary.) It is a favorite notion with "the later criticism," that Zechariah imported his conception of Satan from the Zoroastrian doctrine of Ahriman, the original source of all moral and physical evil; the chief of malignant spirits, the king of darkness and of death, and consequently the eternal enemy of Ormuzd, and of his kingdom of light. But there is neither historical nor logical foundation for this fancy. During the very few years which elapsed between the Persian conquest of Babylon and the appearance of Zechariah as a prophet, there was not time for the theological notions of the Zend-avesta to penetrate the Jewish mind and to color its conceptions of the unseen world. The dualism of Zoroaster must have had a most extraordinary degree of self-propagating power, to pass in so short a time from the central point of the Persian Empire to one of its farthest outlying provinces. Besides, Zechariah's doctrine of Satan differs fundamentally from the Persian conception of Ahriman. The latter is an independent, eternal, and self-existent principle, whereas the former is a created, fallen, malignant being, of vast capacity and immense power of mischief, but still under the control of the Almighty, often thwarted in his machinations, and destined one day to an utter and disastrous overthrow. Nor had Zechariah any need to learn from the Persian theology. The existing precedents in the sacred books of the Jews furnished him with all the materials necessary to construct or to understand the symbolical vision vouchsafed to him. What he sees is the head and representative of the nation in sacred things standing in solemn service before the Angel of Jehovah, who is attended by a train of angelic ministers (ver. 7), while over against this important official stands Satan accusing and opposing; and in the end Jehovah rebukes the adversary and favors his own servant. Manifestly this corresponds in form and in substance to what is contained in the prologue of the book of Job, the date of which is allowed on all hands not to be later than the Solomonic era.

A remarkable confirmation of this view is given in the New Testament, where (Rev. xii. 10) Satan is called, "the accuser of our brethren, who accuses [*ὁ κατηγορῶν*] them before our God day and night." Accusation is the element of his being. He accuses God to men (cf. Gen. iii. 4, 5), and he accuses men to God (as in Job and in this passage). Hence his usual name in the New Testament, *Diabolus*, from *διαβάλλει* = to set at variance, namely, by slander, — a descriptive title quite as strong as the Hebrew term. Satan = opposer, the inherent and everlasting adversary of God and man, and of all that is good. This antagonism, however, takes a particular form which runs through all the Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, and is seen not dimly in our prophet. In the curse pronounced in the Garden of Eden upon the tempter, the Old Serpent (Rev. xii. 9), God declared that He would put enmity between him and the woman, and out only

that, but "between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The seed of Satan are all the ungodly, of whom he is the head; the seed of the woman are all the godly, of whom Christ is the head. These two heads stand in mortal conflict; both suffer, but the one only in the extremities, the other in a vital part. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested; that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). In the end the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ will be too much for the craft and malice of Satan. Still that malignant being opposes the truth, and leaves no stone unturned to turn away God's favor from his people, and thus overthrow the entire redemptive economy. This is the point of the symbolical vision here. Did the Lord cast off his people entirely and recall his promised grace, the historical basis for the Messiah to come would perish, and no room be left for his appearance according to the ancient predictions. The issue, then, was vital. It did not concern an individual merely; it did not belong only to some one particular crisis in the history of the restored exiles; but it touched the very existence of the Kingdom of God on earth. If the confessed sins of Israel were sufficient to secure their final rejection from God at that stage of their history, the hopes of the race were blasted, and the prospect of a blessing for all the families of the earth, became a beautiful but empty dream.

2. The doctrines of grace are finely illustrated in this vision. The opposition of Satan is evidently grounded on a charge of sin in Joshua and those for whom he acts. Joshua came before the Angel of Jehovah in his representative capacity, which of course implies the existence of sin to be atoned for and pardoned, for holy beings need no sacrificing priesthood between them and God. This was emphasized at the present time by the recollection of the abominations which had called down the Babylonian captivity, and the still more recent remission of the restored people in building the Temple. The Jews were weak in faith, despondent in spirit, and more prone to labor for their temporal fortunes than for their spiritual interests. Satan then had a high vantage-ground from which to oppose them. But mark the source of his repulse. "Jehovah, Jehovah that chooses Jerusalem, rebuke thee!" The people are reminded here, as they so often were in earlier times, that they had not chosen the Lord, but He had chosen them. It was not their numbers, nor wisdom, nor wealth, nor moral excellence (Deut. vii. 7, 8) which induced Him to make them the depository of his truth and the channel of his grace to a fallen world. It was his own sovereign, condescending grace which had its own reasons, but not reasons subsisting in the moral qualities of Israel. As He had chosen them once, the election still continued, and was a valid reason why they should not be cast off. Nay, the very circumstances which Satan might plead against them were in another point of view arguments in their favor. They had been in the glowing furnace of Chaldean bondage and exile, and the smell of fire was still on their garments. Everything in their condition spoke of apostasy and its merited recompense. They were a very small remnant left of that proud kingdom which once stretched from the Leontes to Egypt, and from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. It was difficult to see any trace of the former grandeur in the poverty-stricken colony which gathered around their fathers' graves. But their very fowness and poverty and weakness pleaded for them. They had



been rescued from the common doom of transplanted people by a peculiar providence. A forced migration of an entire population to a distant land usually breaks the old association entirely and forever. New ties and interests are formed, and the present drives the past out of view and out of memory. But here God, by the hand of a man whom He had called and named centuries before he was born (Is. xlv. 28, xlv. 1), had broken the fetters and recalled his banished ones. The work of reestablishment had begun, and should it cease? Nay, verily. The brand so carefully rescued from a general conflagration, would be preserved, notwithstanding all the clamor of Satan. He who had begun the good work would carry it on to completion. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

3. The doctrine of gratuitous forgiveness is the glory of the Gospel. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Even so was the Church taught in the older dispensation, not only by word as when Abrahim's faith was counted for righteousness and by type, as in all the sacrifices, but also by symbol as in the case of Joshua, the high priest. There was no denial of the truth of the facts upon which Satan based his accusation. On the contrary, open confession was made in the very appearance of the priest. Instead of being arrayed in the pure and shining robes expressly appointed for sacerdotal functions, he was clad in filthy garments, — fit emblem of the hideous moral stains by which he and his people were soiled. Each one of those polluted garments echoed the words of the royal penitent, "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me" (Ps. li. 3). Physical stains may be extracted, but no human agency in all the world can take the soil of sin from the conscience. That is done only by the act of the Lord of the conscience. Its accomplishment here was represented by the order to remove the filthy garments and replace them by festal raiment. It was a sovereign act of the God of grace, — I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee. This lies at the root of all true religion. "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." Despair is death. He who has no hope or prospect of the divine mercy, has nothing left but to go on in sin and at last lie down in interminable sorrow. To encourage Israel, fast verging to such a forlorn condition, this vision was vouchsafed. Its aim was not to send the people to sleep in their sins with the false peace of self-righteousness, but to assure them that, notwithstanding the magnitude of those sins, God would of his own free grace remit the penalty and bestow the gift of justification upon the high priest, and in him upon the nation at large. Such an assurance gives peace. Who is he that condescendeth? It is God that justifieth.

4. Great as were the present privileges of the covenant people, something better was in store. Their whole economy was introductory and preparative. The golden age of the Hebrews, unlike that of all other ancient nations, was not in the past but the future. Poets and Prophets rejoiced to sing of one who was to come, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Priests and kings were embodied types of the character and functions of this great deliverer. Reminding Joshua and his colleagues of this truth, Jehovah renews the promise of one who should be by eminence his servant. In naming him, the precise term used by the older Prophets is employed again.

the Branch, which does not mean "a limb in the sense of one among many on the same tree, but a shoot which springs up from the root, and which, though small at first, becomes a tree of wonderful qualities" (Cowley). The monarchy which in the persons of David and his son Solomon stood like a majestic and wide-spreading tree, now lay in ruins, — the huge trunk cut down, mangled, burned. But from the stump there should come a slender shoot, which in course of time would grow up into a mighty monarch of the forest, putting out limbs and foliage under which whole nations should collect themselves. The term therefore kept steadily in view the salient points the people were to seize. The lowly, unpretending, unpromising origin of this deliverer and the ultimately vast sweep of his beneficent agency. In all outward aspects he stood at the farthest possible remove from his distinguished types, whether of the priestly or kingly line. He never bore the brilliant breast-plate of Aaron into the Holy of holies, nor did his hand hold a sceptre except the mocking reed of Pharaoh's soldiers; yet his sacerdotal function was the only real and efficacious one the earth ever saw, and his royal office has secured a depth of attachment and a fullness of service to which all the records of earth-born loyalty together furnish no parallel.

#### HOMEILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

WORDSWORTH: Ver. 1. Satan stood at Joshua's right hand and endeavored to work his ruin. So Satan stood at the right hand of our Joshua on the pinnacle of the Temple and tempted him to cast himself down. He stood at Christ's right hand when He was betrayed by Judas into whom Satan entered; he tempted him in his agony and passion; and he is still standing at Christ's right hand by his opposition to the preaching of the Gospel and by his sowing tares of heresy in his Church. — Ver. 2. Here is a solemn warning against the sarcastic, bitter, and virulent spirit which so often shows itself in speaking and writing against others. The holy angels, even in contending against Satan, use mild words. But these rash and reckless persons imitate Satan who is called in Scripture Diabolus or Calumniator. How can they hope to be with good angels hereafter? Must they not rather look to be with those wretched fiends whom they imitate?

CALVIN: *Jehovah who chooses Jerusalem.* We are reminded that we are not to consider our deserts in order to gain help from God, for this wholly depends upon gratuitous adoption. Hence, though we are unworthy that God should fight for us, yet his election is sufficient, as he proclaimed war against Satan in our behalf. It hence follows that those men who obscure and seek as far as they can to extinguish the doctrine of election, are enemies to the human race; for they strive their utmost to subvert every assurance of salvation.

OWEN: Vers. 3-5. Two things are here said to belong to our free acceptance with God. (1.) The taking away of the guilt of our sin, our filthy robes; this is done by the death of Christ, the proper fruit of which is remission of sin. (2.) But more is required, even a collation of righteousness, and thereby a right to life eternal. This is here called change of raiment, or, as it is called by the Holy Ghost in Isaiah (lxii. 10), the garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness. Now this is made ours only by the obedience of Christ, as the other is by his death.

**MOON:** Ver. 7. A gratuitous justification furnishes no excuse for inaction and sin, but leads to more entire obedience. . . . Fidelity in God's service shall be gloriously rewarded.

**GILL:** *Men of wonder.* The people of God are wondered at by themselves, that God should have any love for them, call them by his grace and at last bring them to glory; wondered at by men of the world that they should make such a choice as they do, should bear afflictions with so much patience, and even thrive and flourish amidst them; wondered at by the angels as they are the chosen of God, the redeemed of the Lamb, and called from among men; and they shall be spectators of wonderful things themselves, which they will

be swallowed up in the admiration of to all eternity.

**CRAWL:** *I will execute, etc.* The engraving of the Church into forms of spiritual beauty, is eminently God's work by the chisel of his providence and the agency of his Spirit.

**JAR:** Ver. 10. The reign of the Messiah is distinguished by three things: (1.) Enjoyment. The very image of the vine and the fig tree is delightful. (2.) Liberty. Slaves and captives did not sit under their vines and fig trees, nor did proprietors in time of war. (3.) Benevolence. "Ye shall call every man," etc. There is no selfishness, no envy. All are anxious that others should partake of their privileges.

## VISION V. THE CANDLESTICK WITH THE TWO OLIVE TREES.

### CHAPTER IV.

- A. *A Golden Candelabrum and its Two Oil Feeders* (vers. 1-5). B. *Divine Grace the Source of Strength and Success* (vers. 6-10). C. *This Means by which that Grace is obtained* (vers. 11-14).

1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man who is  
2 waked out of his sleep; And said to me, What seest thou? And I said,<sup>1</sup> I have  
looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, and its oil-vessel<sup>2</sup> upon the top of it and  
its seven lamps upon it, seven pipes each<sup>3</sup> for the lamps which are upon the top of  
3 it; and two olive trees by it, one on the right of the oil-vessel and the other on the  
4 left of it; And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying,  
5 What are these, my lord? And the angel that talked with me answered and said  
6 to me, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. And he  
answered and spake to me, saying: This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel,  
saying, Not by might and not by power,<sup>4</sup> but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of Hosts.  
7 Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel?<sup>5</sup> Be a plain!<sup>6</sup> And he shall  
8 bring forth the top stone<sup>7</sup> with shoutings, Grace, grace unto it! And the word of  
9 Jehovah came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of  
this house, and his hands shall finish it, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts  
10 hath sent me to you. For who despiseth<sup>8</sup> the day of small things? And they  
rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, [even] those seven;<sup>9</sup> the  
11 eyes of Jehovah, they go to and fro through the whole earth. And I answered  
and said unto him, What are these two olive trees on the right of the candlestick  
12 and on the left? And I answered the second time and said to him, What are the  
two branches<sup>10</sup> of the olive trees, which by means of the two golden spouts<sup>11</sup> empty  
13 the gold<sup>12</sup> out of themselves? And he spake to me, saying, Knowest thou not  
14 what these are? And I said, No, my lord. And he said, These are the two sons  
of oil which stand before<sup>13</sup> the Lord of the whole earth.

### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL

1 Ver. 1. — The Kethibh אֶלֶּיךָ must be considered a copyist's error; the Keth, besides agreeing better with the connection and with usage, is found in numerous MSS., and also in the LXX, Itala, Vulg., Targum, and Peshito.

2 Ver. 2. — קַלְהָת, which is pointed correctly, may stand for קַלְהָתָה, as הַבְּבִקִּים, Hos. iii. 2, which escapes the necessity of assuming a masculine קַלְהָת, of which there is no other example.

3 Ver. 3. — שֶׁבַע וְשֶׁבַע, seven and seven, must be taken distributively, for which there is an exact parallel in 2 Sam. xii. 20. Cf. 1 Chron. xii. 8.

3 Ver. 6. — It seems impossible to establish any distinction between *חַיִּל* and *כֹּחַ*. Both are used indiscriminately of physical or mental or moral power.

4 Ver. 7. — The Masoretic interpunction requires "before Zerubbabel" to be connected with what goes before, and not, as E. V., with what follows.

5 Ver. 7. — Be a plain! is quite as correct a rendering of *לְמִישׁוֹר* as to supply a future (E. V.), and surely far more justified.

7 Ver. 7. — The Hapso over the last letter of *הִרְחִשָּׁה* shows that this word is a feminine form of *רָחַשׁ*, and in apposition with *הָאֵלֹהִים*.

8 Ver. 10. — *כִּי* is one of the two instances in which verbs of this class take Patach instead of Kamets. The other verb is *חָנַן*.

9 Ver. 10. — "Those avenge." The translation makes this phrase the subject of the verb rejoice. Professor Cowles objects to the "violent inversion," but this is not worse than to disregard the accents and both the tense and number of the verb, by rendering "who hath despoiled, etc., Let them rejoice."

10 Ver. 12. — *עֲנָבִי*, *av. ley*, lit., ears, here twigs or branches, so called because of their resemblance to ripe ears of grain, or (*Vorst*) of their undulating motion.

11 Ver. 12. — *עֲנָבִי*. This also is an *av. ley*. It does not mean *presses* (Heugatenberg), which is sustained neither by etymology nor taste; nor *sceptacles* (Pressel), which is too vague; but, as E. V., *pipes*, i. e., tubes or apouts through which the oil was discharged.

12 Ver. 12. — There is a play upon words here. The shining oil is like liquid gold; hence it is said the golden apouts pour gold out of themselves.

13 Ver. 14. — *עַל* (as Henderson suggests) is elliptical for *עַל-פָּנָי* = before; or it may be (as 1 Kings xii. 19. is. vi. 2) lit., above him, which would naturally be the appearance if the Lord was sitting and they were standing.

#### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

In the former vision there was a lively display of the means and ground of the forgiveness of sin. This one advances farther, and shows a positive communication of grace by which all obstacles are overcome and the establishment of God's kingdom effectually secured.

a. *The Vision* (vers. 1-5). Ver. 1. And the angel . . . out of his sleep. These words imply a pause between this vision and the preceding one, during which the interpreting angel had withdrawn, and the prophet had relapsed into the condition of ordinary consciousness. This condition, compared with the ecstatic state in which supersensual objects are seen, was like sleep compared with waking. Hence Zechariah needed to be aroused from his ordinary and normal state. This was done by the return of the interpreting angel. The new vision presented to him is striking. A candlestick of gold with an oil-vessel on top, from which the oil flows into each one of the seven lamps through seven tubes; and two olive trees by the side of the candlestick.

Ver. 2. And I said . . . the top of it. Upon the var. read. see Gram. and Text. The candlestick was formed after the pattern of the one in the tabernacle (Ex. xxv. 31-37), but with some remarkable variations. The candelabrum the prophet saw had a round vessel on its top, and seven feeding-tubes for each lamp, and two trees at its sides, none of which were seen in the original pattern in the sanctuary. The precise meaning of the phrase rendered, seven pipes each, lit., "seven and seven," has been much contested. Hitzig and Henderson propose an alteration of the text, omitting one of the *sevens*, in accordance with the LXX. and Vulgate. Pressel gains the same end by connecting the first seven with what precedes, — which is harsh, and forbidden by the interpunction. Köhler adds the two together, thus making the number of pipes fourteen, but if the prophet had meant that, he would have said so. It is better to take the text as it stands. Forty-nine tubes are very many to proceed from one oil-bowl, but as we know

not the size of either the vessel or the pipes, no judgment can be expressed against the possibility of such a thing. That it was probable, seems to be clearly shown by the fact that the visionary candlestick is a designed enlargement of the real one made by Moses.

Ver. 3. Two olive trees. The meaning of these trees is further explained in vers. 12-14. The candlestick represents the Church as the appointed light-bearer in a dark world. This is confirmed by such passages in the New Testament as Matt. v. 14, 16, Luke xii. 35, Philip. ii. 15, and by the express statement in Rev. i. 20, "the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." The seven lamps indicated the fullness of the light that was shed, and the seven times seven tubes the number and variety of the channels by which grace was imparted to the luminary.

Vers. 4, 5. And I answered . . . no, my Lord. "I answered," i. e., to the statement suggested in the visionary scene. The counter-question of the angel implies that the prophet might have learned the object of the vision from the analogy of the golden candlestick in the holy place. Then the angel gives him the answer.

b. *Divine Grace the Source of all Strength* (vv. 6-10). Ver. 6. This is the word, etc. The vision was an embodied prophecy intended to be the first instance for the guidance and comfort of Zerubbabel; and its sum was given in the abrupt utterance: "Not by might," etc. That is, the work which the Hebrew governor has undertaken will be carried out not by human strength in any form, but by the Spirit of God. The candlestick gave light, but it could not do this unless furnished with a plentiful supply of oil. So all that was needful for the maintenance of the Church of God on earth, including the restoration of its material centre at the time, the Temple, could be attained only by the same blessed agency. That the oil of the lamps should symbolize the Holy Spirit, is the less strange, as the anointing oil of consecration was understood always to mean this. The attempt of Kliefoth to establish a distinction between the two words *שֶׁמֶן* and *יִסְקָר* as if the former al-

ways meant anointing oil, and the latter, illuminating oil, is altogether vain. Both are used promiscuously for either purpose, and both may have the same symbolic signification.

Ver. 7. *Who art thou, etc.* As the resources of the Jewish leader were few, and the obstacles in the way numerous, and formidable, the thought contained in ver. 6 is expanded in a striking form. The exclamation, *Who art, etc.*, gives great vividness to the sentiment, and this is still further increased by the concise force of the appended command, *Into a plain!* Some understand by the mountain the Persian Empire, which is to be leveled to a plain (Chald., Jerome, Kimchi, Hitzig, Hengstenberg, Keil, etc.). But it is better to take it as a figure of the colossal difficulties which rose mountain high at the configuration and completion of the building of the temple. So Kliefoth, Neumann, and most interpreters. This view includes the other, and at the same time allows of an application of the assurance to the Church in all ages. That a mountain in prophecy usually symbolizes a kingdom, as Hengstenberg insists, surely does not compel us always to understand it in that sense. As one well says, the imagery of the Bible is not stereotyped. And he *shall bring, etc.* The second half of the verse foretells the joyful completion of the Temple. The stone mentioned is not, as Hengstenberg and Henderson say (with whom agrees Dr. J. A. Alexander, in his comment upon Ps. cxviii. 22), the foundation-stone, for which a different phrase is used (Job xxxviii. 6, Jer. li. 26), but the finishing or gable stone. Nor can the verb be rendered as a simple preterite (Hengstenberg), but in accordance with *Var. cons.*, must be given as in E. V., "And he shall bring," etc. The nominative to the verb is not Jehovah (Henderson), but Zerubbabel, as the next verse plainly shows. The Jewish leader shall at last bring forth the copstone amidst loud acclamations of the people, crying, *Grace, grace unto it!* i. e., May God grant his grace to the stone and the building it represents, so that it may stand forever.

Ver. 8. An additional communication is now made to the Prophet. Its source is not mentioned, but the analogy of ver. 9 b. with il. 9-11 indicates the angel of Jehovah as the author.

Ver. 9. *The hands of . . . sent me.* As Zerubbabel had laid the foundation of the house of God (Ezra iii. 8-10; Hag. ii. 18), so should he finish it. A confirmation of this promise is given in the next verse.

Ver. 10. *For who despiseth . . . whole earth.* The construction here is much disputed. Many (LXX., Targum, Peshito, Vulgate, Calvin, Ewald, etc.) make the second clause the apodosis of the first, thus, "for whoever despises the day of small things, they shall see with joy," etc. But

it cannot be rendered *whoever*, when followed by a preterite with *Var. cons.* Keil and Wordsworth retain the interrogation, but consider it = a denial; in the sense that no one who hopes to achieve, or does achieve, anything great, despises the day of small things. But this gets a meaning out of the text by first putting it in. It is better to take the clause as a general challenge, "Who despises," etc., i. e., with reason. Then follows the ground of the question in the rest of the verse, the staccato style of which is well explained by Pressel as a climax, of which the steps are three, namely, (1.) *Those seven*, already mentioned in the previous vision. (2.) *They are the eyes of Jehovah.* (3.) *They sweep through all the earth.* These seven

eyes, the seven-fold radiations of the Spirit of Jehovah (comp. on il. 9), gladly see the plummet, etc. However discouraging the small beginnings may be in themselves, the willing coöperation of the divine Spirit ensures success to the enterprise of Zerubbabel. The plummet in the hand indicates the work he is engaged in.

c. *The means by which this aid is secured* (vers. 11-14).

Ver. 11. *And I answered . . . lo!* The main portion of the symbol has now been explained, but there remains one feature untouched, — the olive trees on either side of the candelstick. Accordingly the Prophet asks the interpreting angel. But without waiting for an answer, he renews the question with a slight modification. The repetition seems to indicate a conviction in his mind of the great significance of this new and peculiar feature of the candelabrum.

Ver. 12. *I answered the second time, etc.* Here it is the branches of the oil trees he inquires about. These are emphasized, apparently, because they are the link of connection between the candelabrum and the trees, and because the peculiarity of this part of the symbol lay in the fact, that the supply of oil came without any intervening agency directly from the source in nature. These branches through apouts discharge at once their oil, which is called *gold*, because of its color or preciousness. A similar use of this word is found in Job xxxvii. 22, where it is said, "Gold cometh out of the north," gold being put for the golden brightness of the sky (E. V., fair weather). The later critics incline to take the word literally.

Ver. 13. To awaken his attention still more to the importance of this portion of the symbol, the angel asks the Prophet if he understood its meaning, and being answered in the negative, proceeds to give the necessary information.

Ver. 14. *These are the two sons of oil, etc.* "Sons of oil" = supplied with oil, i. e., anointed ones. "Stand before" = are servants of. These sons of oil are not the believing members of Israel and the Gentiles (Kliefoth), for this would confound the olive trees with the candelstick; nor Haggai and Zechariah (Hoffman, Baumg., etc.), nor Joshua and Zerubbabel considered as individuals (Henderson, Pressel), for the supply of oil to the candelstick, i. e., the communication of grace to the Church, could not be made to depend upon the lives of two mortal men. The phrase rather denotes the regal and priestly offices which were the chief media in the Old Testament for conveying God's gracious gifts to the Church, and which at the time of the vision were represented by Joshua and Zerubbabel. The appropriateness of the designation lies in the fact that unction was the ceremony by which persons were inducted into these offices.

The peculiar encouragement of this vision appears in the circumstance that the Church was still represented by a stately candelabrum, made as formerly of solid gold, but furnished with far more numerous pipes of communication, and supplied with oil, not by the daily service of the priests, but from living olive trees at its side which continually poured in a fresh and abundant stream of the golden liquid.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The Church is a golden light-bearer, and therefore at once precious and luminous. Pro-



clous in the sight of God as chosen and called and honored by Him. Zion is his peculiar inheritance, its members are his jewels, acquired by an immeasurable ransom. Notwithstanding, therefore, their fewness or obscurity or imperfections, they are properly symbolized by an article made of solid gold. But this article is as significant in its use as it is in its material. It is a candlestick or lampstand. Its object is to give light. Hence our Lord said to his followers, Ye are the light of the world. This has been one of the chief functions of the Church in all ages. For the greater part of the race has always been in the condition described by Isaiah (lx. 2), "Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the peoples." This was the natural and necessary result of depravity, "their foolish heart was darkened." They often made great advances in civilization, but there was no corresponding growth in religious opinion or practice; on the contrary, "professing themselves to be wise they became fools." All the true and pure light the ancient world enjoyed streamed out from the candlestick which God set up in his chosen people. With all their imperfections, the Jews preserved the knowledge of the true God and of the mode of acceptable worship; and their sacred books were a torch from which many a minor light among surrounding nations was kindled. Still more largely was this the case when the new economy was established. It was intended to be diffusive and propagandist, but only by the force of light, — the manifestation of the truth. It courted the day. It disowned the unfruitful works of darkness. It demanded intelligent faith and adherence. Never was there a more unscriptural maxim than that which claims ignorance as the mother of devotion. The Church is now, as she always was, a light-bearer, and seeks to accomplish her objects by mental and moral illumination. Nor is there the least ground for the not infrequent charge of enmity to the progress of discovery in physical science. Zion holds firmly that the author of nature and of revelation is one and the same, and that it is quite impossible that there can be any real discordance between the two forms of God's self-disclosure. She objects to hasty inferences and unsound deductions, but knowledge, true knowledge of all kinds, she welcomes as akin to her own nature, and subservient to those great ends for which the Most High has set up his golden candlestick in this dark world.

2. But the Church like the moon shines only with a borrowed light. She has no resources of her own. All depends upon the central Sun of Righteousness, not only for illumination, but for every other kind or degree of influence. This is a fundamental truth of Scripture and experience. In religious development, outward or inward, the efficient cause always lies back of what is seen. God uses human instruments, and rarely, if ever, operates independently of them, but when they effect their aim, the power comes from above. A sailing vessel perfectly appointed and manned, cannot move in a calm. The most ingenious machine accomplishes nothing, if motive power be withheld. In like manner the Church is helpless if forsaken of the Spirit of God. A new birth, a new creation, a resurrection from death in trespasses and sins, — these are objects which mock all the array of mere human agencies. Only He who made the soul and breathed into it of his own inspiration can recast the broken mould and bring back the fair image so sadly marred by sin. Hence

the unspeakable importance in all Christian work of giving due honor to the Spirit. Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. The Apostles were held fast in Jerusalem until the Spirit was poured out from on high. Then and not before, the Word had free course and was glorified. And so it has been ever since. Whether in individual conversions or in mighty movements among races and nations, the effect is due to a divine and supernatural cause. In the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, so long as this truth was recognized, the work went on; but when an arm of flesh was introduced and reliance placed upon government or policy, a retrograde movement began. God is jealous for his honor; his glory He will not give to another. If his people will not receive the doctrine that all real advances are made by his Holy Spirit, then He teaches them by sore experience that nothing can be done by might or by power, by the very best human appliances. Leviathan is not so tamed. "He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood, and laugheth at the shaking of a spear." Only "He that made him can make his sword to approach unto him."

3. The contempt of small beginnings especially in religious matters has been quite a common feeling. Yet such a feeling is rebuked by the whole experience of the Church of God. The prospect of a godly seed on the earth once lay wrapped up in a childless man, "and him as good as dead;" and yet there sprang from Abraham as many as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable. The stripling David was reproved by his brothers and derided by Goliath, yet a stone from his sling laid the giant low. The Psalmist sings of a handful of corn on a bleak mountain top, which yet yields a harvest that rustles like the lonely woods of Lebanon; and the Prophet tells of a worm Jacob which threshes the mountains. Samiritan scoffers laughed at the first feeble walls of restored Jerusalem, yet there came a time when to suppress the sedition of that city strained the last resources of Imperial Rome. Twelve men went forth to give the Gospel to the world, and before the end of the first century, believers were found all the way from the shores of Britain to far Cathay. In the sixteenth century one man entered the lists against the anti-Christian corruptions of the time, and Leo X. spoke contemptuously of "Brother Martin," but in the issue one half of Europe was emancipated from the papal yoke, and the May of Sin received a fatal blow. The finest wit of Great Britain set the polite world on a broad laugh at the "consecrated cobblers" who commenced the work of East Indian missions; yet to-day the whole Church of Christ honors that heroic vanguard of Hindoo missionaries, and the friends of the wit would gladly sponge out his misplaced jests. The law of Providence is to begin with a day of small things. A little heaven hid in the measures of meal at last affects the entire mass. The smallest of seeds when planted grows into a tree upon whose branches the fowls of the air may lodge. No mature grain ever springs instantaneously from the earth. It is "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The oak which has withstood the storms of a thousand years was once an acorn. The mighty river which fertilizes a continent began with a tiny streamlet which even an infant's hand could divert. It becomes no one, least of all a believer, to deride a feeble beginning. No matter how small it may

so, yet if carried forward in faith and prayer, neither man nor angel can tell whereunto it may grow.

4. The effusion of the Holy Ghost is not an arbitrary thing. Whitsunday stands in direct relation with Good Friday and Easter. The lamps of the candlestick give light because the manifold tubes convey oil in a constant flow from the central reservoir. But how is this reservoir kept full? By living trees whose supply is perpetually renewed. These living trees are the priesthood and kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. By his sacrifice the blessed Lord procured the measureless grace of the Holy Ghost, and by his enthronement at the Father's right hand He has power to shed down the life-giving influence in streams as mighty as those which made Pentecost forever memorable. "These trees are living, ever-living. The blood of the one great ransom is ever new (*novus, recens*); it does not clot so as to be inefficacious; it belongs to an unchangeable priesthood; it endures to the uttermost in point of time. So the session on high is uninterrupted." Our Lord sat down forever on the right hand of God (Heb. x. 12), and therefore always holds his ascension gifts to be dispensed at will for the preservation, the extension, and the exaltation of his Church. The oil of grace cannot fail; just because the Lord Jesus is an eternal priest and an eternal king. Here is a valid ground for faith, hope, and prayer. There is no machinery by which the most fervid evangelist can yoke the blessed Spirit to his methods and measures. But the varied and repeated and emphatic promises of the One Mediator (John. xiv. 16, 17, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7-11, 13-15) encourage every toiler in the vineyard, however feeble or obscure, to look up to the priest upon his throne, with an absolute conviction that his arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear. If the Saviour in the days of his flesh, had the Spirit without measure, how much more must He now, in his glorious exaltation far above all heavens! The wonders of Pentecost were explained by the Apostle Peter (Acts ii. 33) as an immediate gift of the ascended Saviour, who "having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." The supply of spiritual gifts depends upon the perpetual intercession within the veil; and in vain do we look for oil in the lamps if by conceit or neglect we neglect the olive-branches from which alone the supply is maintained.

#### DOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**CALVIN:** The material of the candlestick was intended to set forth a mystery. It is indeed true that gold is corruptible; but as we cannot otherwise understand what exceeds the things of the world, the Lord, under the figure of gold and silver and precious stones, sets forth those things which are celestial, and which surpass in value the earth and the world. It was for this purpose that God commanded the candlestick to be made of gold, not that He needed earthly wealth or riches, or was pleased with them as men are.

**WORDSWORTH:** Observe the candlestick is golden and the oil is called gold; it is like liquid gold. The Church must be pure and holy; and what she teaches and ministers to the people must be pure and holy also; not adulterated with the admixture of any novel doctrines, such as those which have been added by some to the faith once delivered to the saints, and imposed as necessary to salvation.

**C. BRADLEY:** Observe, these Scriptures do not say that there are no enemies, no mountains, no difficulties. They do not make the salvation of the Church that light thing which some of us make it. On the contrary, they suppose it to be in itself a work of the utmost difficulty. But then, Christ, they tell us, is more than equal to it; He is mighty to save; He can prepare his people for heaven and carry them there, in spite of everything.

**JONAS FOSTER:** When good men despise the day of small things, it is because the grand essential of religion, *Faith*, is wanting. They lack faith in the unerring wisdom of the Divine scheme and determinations; faith in the goodness of God, the absolute certainty that infinite wisdom and power cannot be otherwise than good; faith in the promise of God, that his servants shall in the succession of their generations see his cause advance from the small to the great, though this be not granted to any one separately.

**PARSON:** We ought not to despise the day of small things, because, (1) such conduct tends to prevent its becoming a day of great things. (2) Angels do not despise, etc., but rejoice over even one repenting sinner. (3) Our Saviour does not break the bruised reed, nor quench, etc. (4) God does not despise, etc., but noticed even some good thing found in the son of Jeroboam. (5) The day of small things is the commencement of great things.

**GILL:** The lamp of a profession without the oil of grace is a dark and useless thing.

### VISION VI. THE FLYING ROLL.

#### CHAPTER V. 1-4.

A. A large Roll flying over the Land (vers. 1, 2). B. It contains and executes a destructive Curse (vers. 3, 4).

1, 2 And I lifted up my eyes again, and saw, and behold a flying roll. And he said to me, What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying roll; its length twenty cubits and its breadth ten cubits. And he said to me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on this

side according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on that side, according to it. I have brought<sup>2</sup> it forth, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth by my name to a falsehood, and it shall lodge<sup>4</sup> in the midst of his house and consume it, both its wood and its stones.

# TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 1. — *Again.* For this meaning of *וְעַתָּה*, cf. 2 Kings i. 11.

2 Ver. 2. — *וְעָרָה* = emptied, exhausted, here manifestly = destroyed.

3 Ver. 4. — *וְעָרָה* cannot be rendered, "I will bring it forth."

4 Ver. 4. — *לָלַיְתָה* irregular for *לָלַיְתָה*. It means, to pass the night, *h. abide*.

# EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The series of visions here takes a sharp turn. All that preceded were of a consolatory character, setting forth the overthrow of Zion's foes, the forgiveness of the people, their illumination and exaltation by the Spirit of God, and consequently the sure and speedy completion of the Temple. Now, however, the prophet is directed to show his countrymen that Jehovah is a holy God, and wickedness cannot dwell with Him. There is no toleration for sinners while they continue such. As many as still remain impatient, or reject God's provision of mercy; shall be visited with an exterminating judgment, or experience a captive exile far longer and more dreary even than that which their fathers had suffered in Babylon. This is set forth vividly and plainly in the two visions which follow, which, although entirely distinct in form and manifestation, yet are closely allied in subject and bearing.

The former of the two borrows the groundwork of its striking symbolism from the Mosaic Law ("curse," "roll"), and sets forth with fearful energy the retributive consequences of sin.

(c.) *The Flying Roll* (vers. 1, 2). Ver. 1. I lifted up . . . again. This implies an interval, longer or shorter, since the last vision. What he saw is described fully in the next verse.

Ver. 2. And he said. That is, the interpreting angel said; as is obvious from what precedes. "Roll" = book-roll or parchment; of course one as large as this must have been composed of many skins fastened together. It is seen flying over the earth unrolled, so that its size could be discerned. Its dimensions are ten yards long by five broad. Some (Köhler, Henderson, *et al.*) consider these measurements as intended only to state that it was of considerable size. But as that could be so easily expressed in a simpler way, it is better to regard the dimensions as significant. But of what? Hengstenberg, Hoffman, Umbreit, following Kimchi, assume a reference to the porch of the

Temple which was of the same size (1 Kings vi. 3), and infer that the intention was to represent the judgment as "a consequence of the theocracy," to which, however, it is justly objected that the temple-porch in itself had no symbolic significance, nor was it a meeting-place for Israel. Keil and Kliefoth say that the dimensions were taken from those of the holy place of the tabernacle (twenty cubits by ten), and explain, "the measure by which this curse upon sinners will be meted out will be the measure of the holy place," i. e., it will act so as to cut them off from the congregation of the Lord which appeared before God in the holy place. I should prefer to take the dimensions as a suggestion of the scope of the impending judgment, namely, the covenant people.

(b.) *Meaning of the Roll* (vers. 3, 4). Ver. 3. This is the curse. Henderson compares our Lord's words, "This is (represents) my body," "The whole land," i. e., of Israel, as the analogy of the preceding and following visions shows. The curse hovers over the entire region, ready to fall upon its destined objects. These are the thief and the false swearer, who are taken as examples, one from each table of the law; and therefore stand for all sinners. Such are to be cut off = driven out of the fellowship of God's people, with the usual implication, in that phrase, of destruction. On this side, on that side, refer to the two sides of the roll (Ex. xxxii. 15), on one of which was the curse against one class of sinners, and on the other that against the other class. Then according to it (i. e., according to its terms) refers respectively to these two sides.

Ver. 4. I have brought. To render this in the future, as E. V. is a needless departure from the original. God has caused it to come forth, as the prophet sees. He proceeds now to tell him what it will do. It will enter the house of the sinner, and come to stay. Lodge, literally, pass the night, and hence dwell permanently. Nor will it remain idle, but destroy until not only the contents but even the most durable parts of the house were consumed. Cf. 1 Kings xvii. 38.

## VISION VII. THE WOMAN IN THE EPHAH.

## CHAPTER V. 5-11.

A. *The Prophet sees an Ephah going forth* (vers. 5, 6). B. *A Woman thrust down in it and shut in* (vers. 7, 8). C. *The Ephah carried away to Shinar* (vers. 9-11).

5 And the angel that talked with me came forth, and said to me, Lift up thine  
6 eyes, I pray, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And  
he said, This is the ephah that goeth forth. And he said, This is their aim<sup>1</sup> in  
7 all the land. And behold, a round piece<sup>2</sup> of lead was lifted up, and this is a  
8 woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness; and  
he cast her into the midst of the ephah, and cast the weight<sup>3</sup> of lead into its mouth.  
9 And I lifted up my eyes, and saw, and behold, two women came forth and the wind  
was in their wings, and they had wings like a stork's wings; and they lifted<sup>4</sup> up  
10 the ephah between earth and heaven. And I said to the angel that talked with  
11 me, Whither are these taking the ephah? And he said to me, To build for her<sup>5</sup> a  
house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be established<sup>6</sup> and settled there upon its  
own base.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 6. — עֵינֵיהֶם, Ut, eye, here that to which the eye is directed — aim. The Geneva version gives *sight*. See Haag and Crit.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 7. — עֵבֶר. Margin of E. V. gives *weighty piece*, but the word denotes shape rather than size or weight. It is another word that is rendered *weight* in the next verse.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 7. — אֶחָד. This seems to be one of the cases in which the first numeral is employed as an indefinite article, as Ex. xlii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 8. — אֶבֶן — stone, here *lead-weight*, just as in iv. 10 it is used with תְּקֵלִיל to mean *tin-weight* or *plumb-line*.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 9. — In עֲשֶׂהָ the quiescent N is dropped (Green, *H. G.*, § 104, 2).

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 11. — The grammatical subject of the suffix in בָּהּ is of course the ephah, but logically it must refer to the woman it contains, as a house is not built for a measure. The marginal Masoretic note calls for a *Raphe* to mark the absence of a dagesh in the ה, but it is not found in the text.

<sup>7</sup> Ver. 11. — הָיָה according to its gender is to be construed with בָּהּ, and הָיָה with אִתָּהּ or the woman inclosed in it.

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

a. *The Ephah* (vers. 5, 6). Ver. 5. And . . . goeth forth. This shows that we have a new vision here, and not a continuation of the preceding one (Umbreit, Neumann, Kell). The two are closely allied, indeed, in tone and character, still they are distinct in form and as such were represented to the Prophet.

Ver. 6. What is it? The Prophet sees some vague form rising, as it were, out of mist, but is not able to distinguish what it is. To his question he receives the reply that this is the ephah, i. e., the one which is to constitute the main feature of the vision. The ephah was one of the most familiar of dry measures among the Hebrews. Its capacity cannot now be exactly determined; according to Josephus it contained something more than eight gallons and a half; according to the Rabbis, a little less than four gallons and a half. Nothing in the interpretation depends upon its exact measurement. The latter part of the verse is difficult. עֵינֵיהֶם is rendered

by the LXX., Peshito, and Arabic, as if it were pointed עֵינֵיהֶם (their sin), and these have been followed by Hitzig, Burger, and Fürst (in Lex.). But for such a reading there is only one MS. authority, and besides, as Pressel says, in that case the ephah would be called *unrighteousness* in ver. 6, and the woman in it would receive that name in ver. 8. We must, therefore, accept the traditional pointing, and render *their eye*, but in what sense? Many from Luther down say that it means appearance, or as in E. V. "resemblance," i. e., the people are like the sin-containing ephah (Hosenmüller, Maaser, Buason, Kell). But this is an onomastic sense of the word, and besides gives a frigid sentiment. It is better to take the term as designating the object to which men's eyes were directed (Umbreit, Hengstenberg, Köhler, Pressel). The dwellers in all the land were looking to the ephah as a measure to be filled with sin. Their success and its unhappy results are set forth in what follows.

b. *Its Contents* (vers. 7, 8). — Ver. 7. A round piece of lead. The symbol is still further developed, and the Prophet sees now a circular mass of



ment lifted up over the ephah. **קָנָה** is often rendered *talent* elsewhere in cases where its meaning as such is determined by a following noun, but here it is better to adhere to the literal sense. This is. Now for the first time it appears that the ephah has an occupant. Hence the form of the expression "This is," equivalent to, *See, there is a woman, etc.* **זָנָה** is probably used merely for the indefinite article (1 Kings xx. 13); but if it is to be pressed as *one woman*, it will then indicate that the sinners, although many in number, are considered as one living personality.

Ver. 8. *This is wickedness.* On the meaning attached to this phrase turns the entire bearing of the vision. Many (Calvin, Köhler, Plessel, Baumgarten, Henderson), take it as *wickedness in itself*, abstracted from its perpetrators, and this, they say, is confined, sealed up, and transported far off, so as to leave the land where it once dwelt pure; and thus the vision is one of promise. But this view is opposed by the tenor of the preceding vision which all admit to be closely allied to this one, as well as by its own intrinsic improbability, although Hengstenberg speaks far too strongly when he says "It is only concrete sin that admits of being carried away. The transportation of sin apart from sinful individuals, is nonsense." How would that learned man have reconciled with his statement such language as that of the Psalmist (clii. 12); "Far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us!" But on this hypothesis it is difficult to conceive of any reason why Shinar rather than any other place should be mentioned as the place of deportation (ver. 11). It is better therefore to take the other view (Marek, Hengstenberg, Keil), which regards the woman as a personification of the ungodly Jewish nation. A somewhat similar usage is found in 2 Chron. xxiv. 7, where (in Hebrew) Athaliah is called "the wickedness." Consequently, the subsequent acts of the angel, in casting the woman down into the measure and then closing the same with the heavy solid lid, simply indicate the full provision made for the due punishment of the sinners thus carefully secured.

c. *Its Removal* (vers. 9-11). — Ver. 9. Two women came forth, etc. The removal of the ephah with its contents is described. This is done by two women, — *women* because it was a woman they were carrying away, and *two*, because the burden was too heavy for one to bear. They are furnished with *wings*, because the movement is to be through the air. The wings are specified as being those of a *stork*, not because the stork is a bird of passage (Umbreit, Baumgarten, etc.), for the movement here is not periodical; nor because it flies fast (Maurer), for other birds fly faster; nor because it was an unclean bird (Köhler); nor because it was a *pis avis* (Neumann), which does not suit the object; but simply because it had broad pinions, and such were required to sustain so heavy a mass as the ephah with its leaden lid. The wind was in these wings to increase their velocity. The women have been supposed to represent Israel and Judah, or Ezra and Nehemiah, or the two last kings of Judah, or the two captivities, or Titus and Hadrian; but there is no need of strictly defining them, since they belong to the mere drapery of the symbol, and stand only as representatives of the powers employed by God to carry away the sinners of his people.

Ver. 11. To build . . . Shinar. In reply to the Prophet's question he is told that the object of

the two women is to prepare a permanent habitation for her, i. e., the woman in the ephah. *Shinar* is an old historic name (Gen. x. 10), afterwards applied poetically to Babylon (Is. xl. 1; Dan. i. 2). Its occurrence here led Rosenmüller to suppose that the entire vision referred to the past, and not to the future, which is simply impossible. There is no difficulty in explaining it by a reference to the usage of the Prophets, to represent future events by images drawn from the past, and at the same time transfer to the former the names which belong to the latter. This verse then simply foretells the punishment of wickedness by another exile, — like that to Babylon, and therefore called by its name, but far more prolonged. This latter feature is expressed by the building of the house, but intensified by the final clause — "established and settled on its own base." According to Keil, *Shinar* is not here a geographical epithet, but taken as an ideal designation of the sphere of ungodliness, and the symbol accordingly expresses the truth that the wicked will be removed out of the congregation of the Lord and permanently settled within the ungodly kingdom of this world. This distinction and separation will run on through the ages, and at last be completed in the general judgment. Henderson maintains that the woman in the ephah represented idolatry which was carried away by the two women, i. e., Assyria and Babylon, to Chaldaea, where it was to commingle with its native elements, and never be reimported into Canaan; in support of which he cites the fact that for two thousand years the Jews have never once lapsed into idolatry. But idolatry did not at this time exist in Judea, and therefore could not be removed out of it; and if it was taken to Babylon, it certainly did not remain there, for the Mohammedan occupants of that region are not idolaters. It agrees better with the original force of the word, with the connection, and with the preceding vision, to take the term as denoting the entire wickedness of the people of all kinds, or rather the people as such embodied wickedness. As thus understood, the vision was fulfilled centuries afterward, when the Jews as a whole, having rejected with scorn their Messiah, were given over to the stroke of vengeance. After a most desperate struggle, they were crushed by the Roman Emperor, and scattered to the four winds of heaven. And so they remain, shut up in the ephah, the tremendous weight of their own obstinacy forbidding the prospect of release. The corresponding passage to this one in the second part is couched in different terms (xl. 15, 16). After the rejection of the good shepherd and the breaking of his staves of office, the wretched flock is given over to a foolish or wicked shepherd who does what he ought not to do, and fails to do what he ought, and so the poor sheep suffer in every way. But wholly different as the imagery is in the two passages, there is a remarkable sameness in the underlying idea.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. In the two preceding chapters the constituent elements of the Gospel were presented; here we are brought face to face with the Law. The white robes of innocence and the golden oil of the Holy Spirit disappear, and in their place comes a fearful curse overshadowing the land and threatening an irrecoverable overthrow. There is no contradiction, no inconsistency in this. The one message was as true and as pertinent as the other.

Zechariah's design was not simply to urge on the rebuilding of the Temple at all costs and hazards, but to educate the national conscience, to keep alive the memory of sin, and lay deep the foundations of faith and repentance. When this was accomplished, all outward works would proceed of themselves. And there was at least a part of the people, who needed to be stimulated by the presentation of the sterner side of the divine character. There was a golden future in store for Israel, but not absolutely, not for all simply by virtue of their national origin. The day of the Lord was darkness as well as light (Amos vi. 18), and sinners in Zion would find the messenger of the Lord like refiner's fire and fuller's soap (Mal. iii. 1, 2).

Our Lord indicated this very plainly throughout his personal ministry. The remarkable Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.-vii.) begins with a soothing strain of beatitudes pronounced upon the lowly, and meek, and sorrowful, etc., but very soon corrects any false impressions as to the object of the Messiah by setting forth the perpetuity of the law and his purpose to confirm and establish rather than abrogate its authority. While, therefore, he sweeps away the wretched evasions and glosses accumulated by men's perverse ingenuity, he reaffirms all its particulars as the unchangeable statute of his kingdom,—both as regards precept and penalty. His ends are gained, and his grace is manifested, not by erasing the sanctions of law, but by meeting and discharging them. He soothes consciences not by evading or deluding it, but by satisfying its anxious cravings. The masochistic sentimentalism which denies hell, and refuses to hear of endless retributions, finds no precedent in his words or course.

2. But what was needful for Israel after the exile is equally needful in all ages of the Church. The moral law requires to be continually set forth in its sanction as well as in its precept, and it is an emasculated theology which dispenses with either. The Gospel loses its meaning if there be no such thing as Rectorial Justice. Calvary presupposes Sinai, just as ransom presupposes bondage. What need is there of forgiveness, if there is nothing to forgive? Hence the visions of Satan overthrown and of the luminous golden candelabrum have for their background this wide-spread roll of curses. God will visit for sin, for all sin, whether committed against himself directly or against his creatures. The two tables of the law stand on the same basis, and no man dare pick and choose to which he will render obedience. The anathemas of Scripture are not a mere *brutum fulmen*, but a solid and terrible reality. The lightning of heaven is not more certain and irresistible. Where the curse once enters, it takes up its abode

and consumes all. The standing historical illustration of this truth is seen in that gloomy and death-like sea which is all that now remains of a region once bright with verdant plains and full of populous cities.

3. The strokes of punitive wrath do not fall capriciously or at random. There is ample reason in every case, so that one may always say, This [the ephub] is their object in all the land. Men go on ceaselessly adding sin to sin, and because judgment is not suddenly executed, think that there is impunity; whereas they are only filling the measure. God waits. There is an appointed time with Him, and He will not anticipate. He announced a general principle when he told Abraham that his seed could not take possession of the land of promise, "for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full." The wicked are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. When the end comes, the symbolism of Zechariah is realized. Sinners are shut up with their sins in the measure, the weight of a talent shuts down the lid, and then they are carried where the retribution begins and does not end. Just like that deportation to the figurative Shinar. Its solitary example among the nations testifies of a permanent retribution.

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,  
How shall ye flee away and be at rest?  
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,  
Mankind their country,—Israel but the grave.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**MOORE:** It is needful to tell the love of God, to unfold his precious promises, and to utter words of cheer and encouragement. But it is also needful to declare the other aspect of God's character. There is a constant tendency in the human heart to abuse the goodness of God to an encouragement of sin. Hence ministers of the Gospel must declare this portion of God's counsel as well as the other. . . . The finally impenitent shall be driven from God into gloomy exile, and left to himself, "to rest on his own base," to be subject to the thrall of his own lawless lusts that he has so long pampered into strength, and to reap as he has sowed through a long and limitless banishment.

**WOODSWORTH:** None who enter the porch of the visible Church may flatter themselves that they can escape God's wrath and malediction, if they commit any of the sins condemned by the comprehensive communication of this Flying Roll, which may be compared to a net coextensive with the world and drawn throughout its whole from side to side.

## VISION VIII. THE FOUR CHARIOTS.

### CHAPTER VI. 1-8.

**A. Four Chariots drawn by Horses of different Colors (vers. 1-4). B. Explanation of their Meaning (vers. 5-8).**

1 And I lifted up my eyes again,<sup>1</sup> and saw, and behold, four chariots came from between the two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first

3 chariot were red horses, and in the second chariot black horses, And in the third  
4 chariot white horses, and in the fourth chariot speckled bay<sup>1</sup> horses. And I an-  
5 swered and said to the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And  
6 the angel answered and said to me, These are the four winds<sup>2</sup> of the heavens, coming  
7 forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. That in which are the black  
8 horses goes<sup>3</sup> forth into the land of the north, and the white go behind them, and the  
9 speckled go forth to the land of the south. And the bay went forth, and desired to  
10 go—to pass to and fro<sup>4</sup> through the earth; and he said, Go, pass to and fro through  
11 the earth; and they went through the earth. And he called me and spake to me,  
12 saying, Behold, these that go forth into the land of the north have caused my  
13 Spirit to rest<sup>5</sup> upon the land of the north.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

Ver. 1. — **אֲנִי** — again. Cf. ch. v. 1.

2 Ver. 2. — "Speckled bay," that is, speckled upon a bay ground. The word here rendered *speckled* is not the same as the one so rendered in the R. V. of ch. i. 8. Noyes translates in this place, *spotted-red*.

3 Ver. 3. — **רוּחֵי**. The margin of R. V., *winds*, is better than the text, *spirits*. Cf. Jer. xix. 36. I can find no instance in which the plural is used to denote angelic beings. Certainly Ps. civ. 4 is not one.

4 Ver. 4. — The first clause contains a singular enacoluthon, **וַיֵּצֵא**, referring by its number to the horses, instead of the implied **וַיֵּצְאוּ**, to which it grammatically belongs.

5 Ver. 7. — "Pass to and fro," i. e., in every direction.

6 Ver. 8. — Noyes renders **וַיֵּצֵא** *execute my wrath*, which is an excellent interpretation, but hardly a translation. The R. V. *quieted* cannot be sustained by usage, and is at best ambiguous, although it is copied in Dr. Van Dyck's New Arabic version. The invariable use of the hiphil verb requires the rendering given in the text.

#### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This vision completes the cycle of the series by returning to the point of departure: using imagery much like that of the first vision, and indicating the complete fulfillment of what had there been pledged. Here it is not horses and riders who serve only as exploring scouts, but chariots of war who actually execute what they are commanded. They go forth not from a grove of myrtles in an open bottom, but from between lofty brazen mountains, an adequate symbol of the strength and permanence of the divinely guarded theocracy. They act in all directions, but especially in those regions whence in the past the most formidable enemies of the kingdom of God proceeded. They put in exercise the various destructive agencies indicated by the colors of the horses, — war, pestilence, mourning, famine, — until the Spirit of God is satisfied with the overthrow. But the destruction of the Lord's enemies is the triumph of his friends, and in this view the eighth vision appropriately terminates the first series of revelations granted to Zechariah, with a cheering prospect, of which a fuller development is given in the closing chapters of the book.

a. *The Symbol of the Four Chariots* (vers. 1-4). Ver. 1. Four chariots. . . mountains. The prophet in the usual way indicates that another vision is disclosed to him. The four chariots which he sees can scarcely be other than war chariots, and are therefore a symbol of authority and judgment. The article prefixed to two mountains does not necessarily refer to them as already known (so Hengstenberg, who supposes a reference to Ps. cxxv. 2, which is certainly far-fetched); but simply designates them as forming the background of the scene presented to the prophet. Their ideal character is confirmed by the statement that they are "of brass," a manifest symbol of impregnable

strength. There is no need, therefore, of referring to Zion and Moriah (Manner, Umbreit, etc.), or to Zinn and the Mount of Olives (Keil, Moore), although the latter may have suggested the symbol. A valley guarded by two brazen hills is not an unworthy image of the resistless might of Him who from such a place sends forth the executioners of his will. The number of the chariots, according to the analogies of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation, indicates, like the four points of the compass, universality, a judgment that goes in every direction.

Vers. 2, 3. In the first chariot . . . bay horses. The number of the horses is not mentioned, although the rabbins say there were four to each chariot. The colors are specified, and must be significant. The usual interpretation makes red denote war and bloodshed, black, sorrow and death, white, victory. The fourth color, speckled, commonly derived from a root = hail, and hence rendered, "having hail-like spots," is explained by Hengstenberg as denoting judgments falling like hail (Rev. viii. 7, xxi. 21), but by Keil as indicating famine and pestilence, which is better than to regard it with Henderson, as indicating a mixed dispensation of joy and sorrow, or with T. V. Moore as combining all the others. A more difficult question arises concerning the next word,

**אֲדָמָה**. It is strange to find an epithet of quality in immediate connection with a series referring to color, yet this must be admitted if the word is taken in its usual sense, given in the margin of R. V., Vulgate, and by most expositors, i. e., *strong*. To escape the difficulty, some represent the first consonant, **א**, as softened from **א**, and so get **אֲדָמָה** = bright red (Kfmehl, Calvin, Cocceius, Ewald, Köhler). Others oppose on error of the transcriber (Hitzig, Maurer, Pressel). But it is better with Fürst (in *Lex.*), to derive the word in the text from an Arabic root = to shine, whence he obtains the signification, *dazzling red*. Dr. Van

Nyck, in the modern Arabic Bible, renders it by **שָׁרָד**, = shining red. In any event, the colors of the horses denote the character of the mission on which they are sent. Not an elaborate effort has been made by Hoffman, followed by Kliefoth, Wordsworth, and others, to represent the colors as indicating the four great empires of Daniel as instruments of God's judgments. But this is forbidden by the contemporaneity of the going forth of the several chariots, by their destination as stated in the text, by the lack of historical verification, and other considerations. See Keil and Köhler *in loc.* for a full refutation of this apparently plausible view.

6. *The Explanation (vers. 5-8):* Ver. 5. **These are the four winds.** Not four spirits, as the text of the E. V. has it, and Henderson and Neumann, for angels are rarely if ever so described in the Old Testament, nor in that case would the appended words, "of the heavens," have any suitable meaning; nor does the Scripture know anything of four angels *par excellence*. "These winds, the angel said, came forth from standing before the universal Lord, in whose service they were." Ps. cxlviii: 8. "Stormy wind fulfilling his word." The agency of the four winds in the work of destructive judgment is seen in Jer. xlix. 36, Dan. vii. 2, Rev. vii. 1.

Vers. 6, 7. **That in which are, etc.** These verses describe the particular regions visited by these divinely appointed messengers. The black went toward the land of the north, which all agreed denotes the territory washed by the Tigris and Euphrates. See on ch. ii. 6, 7. The white go after them, not to the West, as Ewald translates, for then we should expect the East also, which does not occur; and besides, the west to the Hebrews represented only the sea. Better is the ingenious view of Pressel, who, insisting on the force of the proposition, renders "to the land farther behind them." This is grammatically tenable, and favored by the fact that it brings into view the further East, the Medes and Persians, as one of the distinct objects of the divine visitation. The land of the south is of course Egypt and Arabia.

Ver. 7. **And the bay went, etc.** So far, the prophet seems to have omitted the first chariot, the one with red horses, and in order to make up the number four, to have divided the third team into two, taking its second designation of color, bay, as the fourth. How are we to understand this?

Keil, who, however, renders **אַרְבָּעָה** *strong*, regards the problem as insoluble. Hengstenberg affirms that the class mentioned in the seventh verse is in reality the first, and they are called strong, because they really were the strongest of all; but this assumes what is certainly not stated; and cannot be proved. Hitzig and Maurer assume that **אַרְבָּעָה** was omitted from ver. 6 by mistake, and afterwards erroneously substituted in ver. 7 for **אַרְבָּעָה**. It is better to interpret the term as Fürst does in ver. 3, although even then it remains inexplicable why the prophet should have described the first class not by its own name but by one already appropriated as part of that of the third. It may, however, be safely inferred that while the various colors of the horses had some significance, yet that this was no matter of very great importance, else the distinctions stated would have been more accurately observed. Certainly the general sense of the vision is plain, whatever view one adopts as to the variations in the description. One point all

agreed in, namely, that the seventh verse sets forth what was done by the horses of the first chariot. These appear to have been not content like the others with one particular territory, but asked permission to go through the whole earth. And he said, i. e., the Lord of the whole earth, who (ver. 5) causes the chariots to go forth.

Ver. 8. **And he called me.** The interpreting angel calls aloud to the prophet, attracting his attention to the purport of the vision. **Have caused my Spirit to rest upon.** This has often been explained as analogous to the phrase "to cause fury to rest," in Ezek. v. 13, xvi. 42, but *wrath* is not the same as *spirit*. Nor is such a violent assumption at all necessary. The Lord's Spirit is sometimes a Spirit of judgment and of burning (Is. ix. 4), and it is in this sense that the chariots let down his manifestations on the nations. This verse specifies only the land of the north as the scene of these operations. But it could easily be inferred from this what was the result in the other directions. The north country was mentioned because, as the inveterate foe of the covenant people, it was the principal mark of the judgments of God, and should in the first instance feel the consuming energies of the Holy Spirit.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The same law obtains in the punishment of the heathen as in that of God's professed people. The harvest is not cut until it is ripe. The measure of iniquity must be full before judgment falls. This doctrine was shown in the last vision in its application to the Jews. In the present as compared with the first, of which it is the complement, the same principle is illustrated in relation to the world at large. At the beginning of this night of disclosures, the prophet learned that there was no indication in the state of the heathen world of any such convulsion as his predecessor Haggai had predicted; but, on the contrary, actual inspection by horsemen commissioned for the purpose brought back information that all the earth was quiet and at rest, thus furnishing a painful contrast to the weak and suffering condition of the people of God. Now he learns that this prosperity and peace of the heathen was not a permanent thing. The time had not come, and nothing could be done until it did come. But it was sure to arrive. The wrath of God is not a caprice or an impulse, but the steady, uniform, eternal opposition of his holy nature against all sin. It can no more cease than He can. It is the very element of his being. He is necessarily "of purer eyes than to behold evil." Not more certainly is He infinite in power or wisdom than He is in justice and truth. And these perfections must find expression in his administration of the affairs of the world. Delay is no evidence to the contrary. The accumulation of sin thus produced, only makes more evident the desert of wrath, and causes a deeper destruction when the blow falls.

2. The resting of God's Spirit upon a land is generally the cause of life, holiness, and peace, but sometimes it is the reverse. In visitations of judgment, the Spirit is a consuming fire. It overwhelms, scatters, destroys. It removes out of the way obstacles otherwise insuperable. It turns mountains into plains. It lays low hasty despots, and prepares means and access for the gentler forms of diffusing the truth. *Pacem petit esse.* The utter destruction of a godless power is sometimes a necessary preliminary to the spread of the Gospel.



## THE CROWN UPON JOSHUA'S HEAD.

## CHAPTER VI. 9-15.

A. *The Symbolic Action; Crowns on Joshua (vers. 9-11). B. Its Meaning; The Branch a Priest and King (vers. 12-15).*

9-10 And the word of Jehovah came to me saying, Take<sup>1</sup> from the exiles,<sup>2</sup> from Chieldai, from Tobiah, and from Jedaiah, and go thou on that day, go<sup>3</sup> into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah whither they have come from Babylon; And take silver and gold and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest;<sup>4</sup> And speak to him saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of Hosts, saying, Behold a man whose name is Branch, and from his place he shall grow up,<sup>5</sup> and build the temple of Jehovah. Even He<sup>6</sup> shall build the temple of Jehovah, and He shall bear majesty, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. And the crowns shall be to Chelem, and to Tobiah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen, the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of Jehovah. And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of Jehovah; and ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me to you; and it will come to pass, if ye will hearken unto the voice of Jehovah your God —<sup>7</sup>

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 10. — The infin. absol. לָקַח, used for the imperative, has no object, and is therefore to be considered as resumed in the לָקַח of ver. 11. This requires us to view the latter half of ver. 10 as a parenthesis, which, as Frenzel says, "is somewhat harsh but not harsher than we often find even in German" or in English.

2 Ver. 10. — גֵּרֵיהֶם, abstract for concrete = the exiles.

3 Ver. 10. — The repetition of הָיֵךְ is one of the cases which have subjected Zechariah's style to the charge of being heavy and dragging.

4 Ver. 11. — This is noted by the Masoretes as one of the twenty-six verses, each of which contains all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

5 Ver. 12. — יִצְחָק — יִצְחָק. Observes the paronomasia: "a sprout will sprout up."

6 Ver. 13. — The first word is very emphatic, Even He and not another. So in the next clause, and He.

7 Ver. 15. — This apostrophe is striking (cf. Luke xiii. 9), "And if it bear fruit —; and if not, then," etc.

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Some interpreters consider what is here related as another vision, but manifestly without reason, since it has none of the peculiarities of the visions, is historical in its nature, and is introduced with the customary formula which denotes an ordinary communication from God, "the word of Jehovah came to me." But while it is not one of the night visions, it is closely connected with them, as appears from the fact that it was given at the same time; that it resumes the principal feature of the most striking of the whole, namely, the fourth, by describing yet further the BRANCH; and that it stands in a close relation of contrast to the vision immediately preceding. That one set forth the severe judgments in store for all the foes of the theocracy. This symbolic action develops the other side of the great subject. The outlying heathen are not all to be destroyed or exterminated. On the contrary, they will one day cease their hostility to the covenant people, and even enter into cordial coöperation with them in building up and adorning the kingdom of God. This

is simply a different form of the same thought given in the second chapter of Haggai, where we are told (ver. 7) that the desire (= desirable things) of all nations shall come, and the Lord will fill the house with glory. We have then here an historical appendix to the night visions, which brings out more clearly their main theme, and especially emphasizes the view that the heathen nations are not simply to be disarmed of their opposition; but made active helpers in the advancement of God's kingdom and glory.

a. *The Symbolic Action* (vers. 9-11). — Ver. 9. And the word, etc. Therefore this is not a vision.

Ver. 10. Take from the exiles . . . from Babylon. The exiles is a term applied by Ezra (iv. 1; vi. 10) to the returned captives (iv. 1; vi. 19), but here evidently means those who were still in exile, and of whom the persons named as having come from Babylon, were representatives. Of these three persons and their host Josiah, we know nothing more than what the passage itself relates. Several interpreters (Jerome, Hengstenberg, Baumgarten), following the LXX., consider their names as significant, but there is nothing to require this

here more than elsewhere, nor do the results thus obtained contribute anything to the proper understanding of the section. The E. V. makes

the subject of **נָזִיף** (Targum, Pesikto, Vulgate, Luther, Hendersan), but it is better to take it as an accusative of place, referring to the house of Josiah (Nathheimer, *H. G.*, 902, 1 b.). So Hengstenberg, Köhler, Keil, etc. According to this view the three men are deputies from the Jews in Babylon, and the fourth was the host with whom they lodged in Jerusalem. On that day, the day mentioned (ch. i. 7).

Ver. 11. **Crowns.** The plural which is repeated in ver. 14 must be significant, and represents, if not two distinct diadems, at least one composite crown of two or more parts. The former is the more natural (cf. Rev. xix. 12) and better suited to the connection which treats of the combination of two distinct offices in one person. Ewald, Hitzig, and Bunsen interpolate "and upon the head of Zerubbabel" after the words "high priest;" but for this there is no authority whatever, critical or exegetical.

b. *The Explanation and Promise (vers. 12-15).*

—Ver. 12 and 13 explain the meaning of the symbolical action just commanded.

Ver. 12. **And speak to him.** Joshua of course would know that the regal function, so firmly fixed in the family of David, could not possibly be conferred upon him as an individual, and that therefore its insignia were placed upon his head typically. This is put beyond doubt by the address here made to him. Behold points to the Messiah as if he were present. He is called Branch as if it were a proper name, as appears not only by the lack of the article, but by the established usage of the earlier Prophets. See on ch. iii. 8. Of this branch or sprout from the fallen trunk of David, it is said, from his place he will grow up. Some (LXX, Luther, Hitzig, Pressel, etc.) render this clause impersonally, "there will be sprouting or growth;" but this overlooks the **נָזִיף** in **נִזְמָנִים**, and besides, changes the subject without reason. Better is the view (Cocecius, Hengstenberg, Baumgarten, Keil, etc.) that the Branch will grow up from his place (cf. Ex. x. 23), i. e., from his own land and nation, not an exotic, but a genuine root-shoot from the native stock to which the promises had been made. **Build the temple**—not the earthly temple then in progress, for this was to be completed by Zerubbabel (iv. 9); not a new and more glorious one of the same kind, for Zerubbabel's temple was to be glorified in the Messianic times (Hag. ii. 7-9; Mal. iii. 1); but (Hengstenberg, Tholuck, Köhler) the spiritual temple of which the tabernacle and Solomon's splendid edifice were only types, the holy house composed of living stones (Eph. ii. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 5). Not a temple, but the temple,—one still in existence and always the same, but destined to an unprecedented exaltation by the Messiah. "The temple of God is now, namely, the Church of the saved, originating in the promise given in Paradise, and lasting to the end of the world" (Cocecius).

Ver. 13. **Even He shall build.** The repetition is not useless, but emphatic, as the expressed pronoun shows. Even he, notwithstanding his lowliness of origin, shall accomplish this great work. **Bear majesty**, i. e., kingly glory and honor, for which **נָזִיף** seems to be the proper and normal term (1 Chron. xxix. 25; Dan. xi. 21; 1<sup>a</sup>. xxi.

5). **Will sit and rule upon his throne.** "The former denotes the possession of the honor and dignity of a king, the latter the actual exercise of royal authority" (Hengstenberg). The suffix **לְהוֹרָה** "his throne" refers not to Jehovah (Vitrings), which is too remote, but to the Branch himself, as is shown by the recurrence of the word in the next clause. **And will be a priest.** Ewald and Hitzig render, "there will be a priest upon," etc., which is both arbitrary and unmeaning. Nearly all interpreters, ancient and modern, render as in the text, and understand the clause to mean, that the Branch would be both king and high priest on one and the same throne. Between them both. Not the Branch and Jehovah (Cocecius, Vitrings), nor the Branch and an ideal priest (Ewald, Bunsen), nor the royal and the priestly offices (Hosemüller, Hengstenberg, etc.); but the king and the priest who sit upon the throne, united in one person, the Branch (Hengstenberg, Umbreit, Köhler). Upon this view, the counsel of peace cannot mean perfect harmony, for that would be a matter of course—yet Jerome, Michaelis, Maurer, and Hengstenberg favor this view,—but is a counsel which aims at or results in peace, like "the chastisement of our peace" in Is. lili. 5, i. e., which has for its object our peace. The sense, then, is that the Branch, uniting in himself royalty and priesthood, will take such counsel as shall result in peace and salvation for the covenant people.

Ver. 14, 15. The Prophet having explained the meaning of Joshua's coronation, now proceeds to give the reason why the silver and gold of which the crowns were composed, were to be obtained from the messengers of the Jews who lived at a distance from their native land.

Ver. 14. **And the crowns shall be.** The crowns, after having been placed upon the head of Joshua, were not to become his personal property, but to be preserved in the temple as a memorial of the deputies from Babylon. The names of these persons are the same as those given in ver. 10, except the first and last; Halem standing for Heldiah, and Hen for Josiah. In the former case the two names are so nearly alike that there is a general agreement in the view which refers them to the same person, and considers the variation as a copyist's error. In the latter, Keil and Köhler render the second name as an appellative noun with the sense of *favor*, and consider it a record of the gracious hospitality which the son of Zephaniah had shown to the deputies from Babylon. But this is certainly artificial, and it is better to assume that Josiah had this additional name. The object of depositing the crowns in the temple was not simply to do honor to the liberality of the contributors from Babylon, but also to extend the typical significance of the whole proceeding. These men, sending from afar their gifts for the house of God, were types of many who would one day come from heathen lands and help to build the temple of the Lord.

Ver. 15. **And they that are afar off.** A manifest prediction that distant strangers should actively participate in setting up the kingdom of God. **And ye shall know**, etc. The occurrence of this result would be a proof of the divine origin of what is here predicted in word and deed. The last clause, and it will . . . your God, is considered by Hengstenberg and Hendersan as an *apostrophe*, If ye will hearken, then—. This certainly gives an emphatic and spirited close to the prophecy, and grammatically agrees better with the form of the original than the *apostrophe*.

that a pronoun has been omitted as the subject of *יָבִיט*. The appressed apodosis of course is, ye shall participate in all the blessings which the Branch is to secure. For other instances of *apodosis*, see Gen. xxxi. 42 and 1. 15 (in Hebrew), and the very striking instances (Ps. xxvii. 13). The question, whether Zechariah really performed the symbolical action here enjoined, is left undecided by some (Hengstenberg, Kell), but there seems little reason to doubt that he did, since the crown was to be hung up in the temple as a memorial.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The favorite designation of the Messiah, BRANCH, reappears, with a considerable simplification of its meaning. An elaborate and costly double crown is placed upon the head of Joshua as the type of one who is merely a slender sprout or root-shoot, which grows up out of its own place. This was exactly true of the historical Christ. He did not descend from heaven in visible glory and greatness. He was not born in the purple, nor waited upon by princes and nobles. He did not enter our world with any show or pomp such as his deluded countrymen expected; but, although a lineal heir of David and able to trace his ancestry back to Abraham, he sprang from a decayed family and had a manger for his first resting-place. The Davids trunk had fallen, and this was a mere sucker growing out of one of the upturned roots. Heaven indeed took notice of the event by the Star in the east, the visit of the Magi, and the songs of the Angels; but the world at large knew little and cared less about the birth at Bethlehem. After the same pattern was his further development. He grew up out of his place in lowly humiliation. For thirty years his home was in Galilee, in the house of a humble carpenter, and during all that time he was known simply as a reputable youth in a country village. An apocryphal Gospel tells marvelous stories of his infancy, but these are pure inventions. The man Christ Jesus grew up as a root out of a dry ground. And even after He commenced his ministry, and did such works as no other man did, and spoke as no other man spoke, He was still but a Branch. Crowds at times gathered around Him, but in all cases they soon fell away. In general He was despised and rejected of men. This continued during his life, was especially marked in the circumstances of his death, and even long afterwards characterized his memory, since one of the best Procurators of Judaea could speak of Him as "one Jesus" (Acta xxv. 19); and a century later the most illustrious of Roman historians knew of him only as the author of a pernicious superstition who himself had deservedly died a felon's death. Yet this neglected and forgotten Branch was to accomplish some wonderful things.

2. One of these was to build the Temple of the Lord. His type, Joshua, was busily engaged in forwarding the erection of the new structure on Moriah, and that edifice, by successive additions in a long course of years, became a most stately and magnificent pile. But it was a far nobler building to which the Branch applied himself, one which was truly a habitation of God through the Spirit, one composed of living stones. The glory of the Temple at Jerusalem was that there the Most High manifested his presence; and all beauty of

form and grace of ornamentation was valued only in so far as it rendered the house fit for the residence of God. Now the true temple, the spiritual house, is the actual dwelling-place of Jehovah, where He displays the fact, not by signs or symbols, not by a material Shekinah, but by the graces of his Spirit wrought in the hearts and manifested in the lives of his people. He dwells not merely among them as a whole, but in each particular member. *Ubi Spiritus, ibi ecclesia*. These members vary widely in other respects, but they are all alike characterized by the indwelling of the Spirit, the source of their life and the bond of their connection with Christ, the head. Now it is this living temple which the Branch builds. He is, according to the common Scripture metaphor, the foundation, the corner-stone; but here he appears as builder. Sending forth his servants he began and still continues the work, collecting, shaping, and laying the materials, until already an innumerable multitude have been framed into such a structure as earth never saw before. The Church on earth has many imperfections, yet after allowing for all these, it is still a *coetus Sanctorum*, a *civitas Dei*, a holy temple in the Lord; and it bears witness in every part to the grace and skill of its great Founder. He, only He, did build, could build such a glorious edifice.

3. The source of his power and success is indicated in the very peculiar functions assigned to Him in the text. He is a priest upon his throne, — a combination wholly strange to the experience of the covenant people, and heretofore known to them only in the dim tradition from patriarchal days, of the mysterious Melehesedek who was at once king of Salem and a priest of the most high God. In the Branch, the Aaronic line and the Davids line should both culminate. He should fulfill the highest ideal of each. As the one, real, atoning priest, he was to attain all *Agonias* for the forgiveness of sins and the removal of guilt; and as the one, real, reigning king, he was to exercise all *Requis* for the inward support and outward protection of his people. The two functions coincided in extent and object. Those for whom the priest offered and interceded, were the very parties over whom the king extended his beneficent reign. This counsel between the two offices, this harmony of aim and purpose, cannot but insure peace — the highest good, temporal and spiritual, of his people. The combination of right and power is irresistible. So it has been in all the past; so it will be in all the future. This man hath an unchangeable priesthood, and his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Heb. vii. 24; Dan. vii. 14). We can see the value of this combination more clearly by considering the consequences, if either function stood alone. Of what avail would be the pardon of sin, if there were no security against its recurrence and dominion in the future? The wiping out of the old score would simply make room for a new one. On the other hand, of what use would be the mastery of all consciences for the present and all time to come, so long as no provision was made for the arranges of former transgression and guilt? The burden of the past would only be the more intolerable as its enormity would be the more clearly discerned and felt. We need a Priest and a King, and, blessed be God, we have them, with a resulting counsel of peace.

4. The calling of the Gentiles belongs to the building of the ideal temple. This is set forth typically by taking materials from Babylon for the

double crown to be placed upon Joshua, and directly by the declaration that they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord. This very expression the Apostle Paul uses to designate the Gentile Ephesians (ii. 17), "you that are far off." Zechariah faithfully selects the words of all his predecessors as to the extent of the final dispensation of grace. The universality indicated in the first promise, and clearly expressed in the oft-repeated covenant with Abraham, was never lost sight of. Even amid the narrow restrictions and close lines of Judaism there were significant intimations that the barriers of race were only incidental and temporary (see on ii. 11), and that one day the light and life of Zion should extend to the ends of the earth. Just as Isaiah (lx. 2, 6, 9) sets forth the future triumph of the Gospel by representing huge caravans as journeying toward Zion, and the ships of Tarshish as engaged in transporting the sons of strangers thither with their alloy and their gold, so our Prophet expresses the same truth by depicting the far-off nations as builders in the temple. As living stones they come, and insert themselves in the sacred edifice, being built upon "Jesus Christ Himself, in whom the whole building groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." And not only that, but under the master-builder, they are the means of gathering others, and so lifting yet higher the walls of that spiritual house which is the temple of the living God. The church-upholders to-day of heathen evangelization are nations farthest off from the old seat of the theocracy.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**MOORE:** The history of the world is arranged in reference to the destinies of the Church; and

the agencies that control that history go forth from the seat of the Church's great head, the unseen temple. Political changes are after all only the moving of the shadow on the earthly dial-plate that marks the mightier revolutions going forward in the heavens.

**BURMAN:** *The temple of Jehorah.* If God so loves his Church as to call it his house, to dwell in it and delight in it; if He deems it so sacred as to call it his temple; if He sees so much grandeur and beauty in it as to speak of its glory; surely, we may find in it something to love, something to delight in, something to revere and admire. . . . *He shall build.* Christ is the builder. (1.) He forms the plan. (2.) He prepares the materials. (3.) He joins the materials together.

**JAY:** The temple is the Church of God. His people, therefore, should remember that all they have and all they are is the Lord's; and that to take anything pertaining to a temple is not only robbery but sacrilege. . . . Christ is the sole real builder. All others build only as instruments. Even Paul and Apollos were only ministers by whom men believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. Too often men are insensible of this, and begin like Melancthon, who supposed in his fervor that he should convert all who heard him.

**PARKER:** Every contribution toward the building up of the Church, coming from a true heart, has its memorial before God, and as a testimony before the world of the divinity of the Gospel. . . . The slowness of the far-off nations to enter into the kingdom of Christ, is due not so much to the hardness of their hearts as to the feeble attention of Christians to the voice of their God and Saviour.

### III. THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE FAST.

#### CHAPTERS VII. AND VIII.

##### I. THE QUESTION PROPOSED: THE PROPHET'S REBUKE.

#### CHAPTER VII.

**A. The Question (vers. 1-4). B. Present Rebuke (vers. 5-7). C. Appeal to the Past (vers. 8-14).**

1 And it came to pass in the fourth year of Darius the king that the word of  
2 Jehovah came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, in Kislew, when  
3 Bethel<sup>1</sup> sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and his men, to entreat Jehovah,<sup>2</sup> to  
speak to the priests who were at the house of Jehovah of Hosts, and to the prophets,  
saying, Shall I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have now<sup>3</sup> done  
4, 5 so many years? And the word of Jehovah of Hosts came to me, saying, Speak  
to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned  
in the fifth (month) and in the seventh, and that for seventy years, did ye fast at  
6 all to me, to me? And when ye eat<sup>4</sup> and when ye drink, is it not<sup>5</sup> ye who eat  
7 and ye who drink?<sup>6</sup> [Know ye] not the words which Jehovah proclaimed by the  
former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and at peace, and her cities round  
about her, and the South, and the Lowland were inhabited?

8 And the word of Jehovah came to Zechariah, saying,



- 9 Thus spake<sup>7</sup> Jehovah of Hosts, saying,  
Judge the judgment of truth,<sup>8</sup>  
And show kindness and pity<sup>9</sup> one to another.
- 10 And widow and orphan,  
And stranger and poor man,<sup>10</sup> do not oppress;  
And evil against a brother  
Conceive ye not in your heart.
- 11 But they refused to attend,  
And offered a rebellious shoulder,  
And made their ears too heavy to hear.<sup>11</sup>
- 12 And their heart they made an adamant,  
That they might not hear the law  
And the words which Jehovah of Hosts sent by his Spirit,  
By means of the former prophets;  
And there was great wrath from Jehovah of Hosts.
- 13 And it came to pass,  
That as he cried and they did not hear,  
"So they said and I hear not,"<sup>12</sup>  
Said Jehovah of Hosts;
- 14 And I whirl<sup>13</sup> them over all the nations whom they knew not,<sup>14</sup>  
And the land was made desolate behind them,  
So that no one goes out or comes in.  
And [so] they made the pleasant land a desert.<sup>14</sup>

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 2. — בִּית־אֱלֹהִים is a proper name here, as it is in Judges xi. 15, 22, 31.

2 Ver. 2. — לְהַלּוֹת אֶת־יְהוָה. Henderson renders this (here and in viii. 21) in rather superfluous English, — to *afflict the regard*. It is not — pray before (E. V.), but simply, to entreat or beseech. Cf. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12.

3 Ver. 3. — וְיָרָא here is equivalent to our *now*. Gen. xxi. 23. See Text. and Gram. on i. 12.

4 Ver. 6. — The tenses in the first clause cannot grammatically be rendered as preterites, as E. V.

5 Ver. 6. — The marginal rendering (E. V.) of the question is better than that of the text, as leaving less to be supplied.

6 Ver. 6. — The question, "Is it not ye," etc., implies, "Have I anything at all to do with it? Is it not your own affair entirely?"

7 Ver. 9. — The first verb *must* be rendered in the preterit; *spake*, not *speakest*.

8 Ver. 9. — Judgment of truth. The margin of E. V. is better than the text.

9 Ver. 9. — חֲסֶד, kindness. רַחֲמִים, pity. See for the latter on i. 16.

10 Ver. 10. — As the first four nouns are anarthrous in the original, it is more literal as well as more spirited to render *Orphan* so in the version.

11 Ver. 11. — In יָשָׁמוּעַ, the preposition has its not unusual privative force.

12 Ver. 12. — The change of tense in the latter half of this verse is obliterated in the E. V. The writer passes from narration, and cites the *ipsissima verba* of Jehovah. This is a better explanation than that which makes the future express a past action still continuing (Moore). Kühler and Pressel extend the citation as far as חֲשַׁב, but it is better with Esaki and Umbreit to make it terminate with יָדַעְתִּים, since the next verb is clearly a preterite.

13 Ver. 14. — וְאֶחָדָם is not an Aramaic form, but results from the guttural attracting to itself the vowel of the preceding *vav*. (Oron, *lib. Gram.*, 60, 3 c. and 92 c.)

14 Ver. 14. — To render the last clause impersonally (Maurer), is enfolding as well as needless.

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This prophecy is separated from what precedes by an interval of nearly two years, during all which time the work upon the Temple had been steadily prosecuted. As the building rose before the eyes of the people and gave promise of a speedy restoration of the ancient worship in its integrity, they became doubtful about the propriety of continuing to observe the solemn fasts by which they commemorated calamitous epochs in their former history, especially the anniversary of the burning of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar on the

fourteenth day of the fifth month. Accordingly a message of inquiry was sent to the priests and the prophets, to which the Lord vouchsafed a direct and abundant answer by the hand of Zechariah. The first part of this answer is contained in the chapter before us. After reciting the occasion of the oracle (vers. 1-3) the prophet rebukes them for the formalism of their services (vers. 4-7), and then reminds them of the disobedience of their fathers and the sad doom which followed (vers. 8-14).

Vers. 1-3. *The Question.* Ver. 1. And it came . . . Kielev. The original here is peculiar, in that the date of time is torn apart, the year being

first mentioned, and then after the insertion of a clause on another topic, the day and month are stated. Moreover, the latter notation, in the fourth . . . Kislav, must belong both to the clause which precedes it and to the one which follows it in ver. 2, — of which Köhler justly says, that although not impossible, it is certainly harsh. The sense, however, is plain. Kislav corresponds to part of November and part of December. The origin and meaning of the name are quite uncertain.

Ver. 2. When Bethel sent, etc. The LXX., Vulgate, Cocceius, *et al.*, make Bethel the object or accusative of place, but in that case it would have been preceded by *ל*, or at least *א*, or made to follow the subject; and besides there seems to be no reason why after the Captivity the Lord should have been sought at Bethel, since neither the altar nor the prophet was there at that time. It must then be the subject, as most expositors hold, but not in the sense of Hengstenberg, as = the congregation of the Lord, the whole people, since there is no usage to sustain this view, but simply = the people of Bethel, many of whom, we know, had returned with Zerubbabel (Ez. ii. 28, Neh. vii. 32), and soon rebuilt their city (Neh. xi. 31). Some make the two following names to be in apposition with Bethel (Ewald, Ritzig), but this is harsh as well as needless. The Bethelites sent two of their number, one of whom has an Assyrian name (Sharezer), and was probably born in exile. Their object was to stroke the face, i. e., to conciliate by caresses, or to entreat, Jehovah. It is farther stated in the next verse.

Ver. 3. To speak to the priests, etc. The priests as well as the prophets were regarded as organs of Divine communications. See Hag. ii. 11, Mal. ii. 7. *לִפְנֵי* is not adequately translated by *obtaining*, i. e., from food, for it means a separation from all the ordinary occupations of life. It is not, therefore, (as Furst and Keil say) = *עֲצָה*. The question is put in the name of the population of Bethel, but they represented what was a general feeling, and hence the Lord's answer is addressed to the people at large.

Vers. 4-7 contain a reproof of their manner of observing a fast.

Ver. 5. Speak to all, etc. The added specification, to the priests, indicates that they particularly needed the information thus given, the substance of which is that the fasting was a matter of no consequence to the Lord. He had not commanded it, nor was it observed out of regard to Him. When the people fasted, and when they ate and drank, it was in either case simply with a view to their own interest. It was therefore a matter of supreme indifference to Him, whether they kept this formal observance or not. The text refers not only to the fast in the fifth month, but also to one in the seventh. This was observed on the anniversary of the murder of Gedaliah and his friends (Jer. xli. 1 ff.). The emphatic repetition, to me, to me, in the end of the verse, is the key to its meaning.

Ver. 6. And when ye eat, etc. That is, your feasting as well as your fasting, is conducted without regard to me, simply for your own gratification.

Ver. 7. Know ye not, etc. The sentence being manifestly incomplete, some supply *לָמָּה* after the first word, and render, "Are not these the words,"

etc. (LXX., Vulgate, Rosenmüller, E. V. margin), but this would require a noun with *לָמָּה* to be taken as a nominative, and besides, there is no record elsewhere of any such utterance of God as this view requires. It is better (Mark, Ewald, Pressel, *et al.*) to supply "know ye," and explain the words

in question by what follows in vers. 9, 10. *לָמָּה*. Some critics contend for an intransitive rendering as alone proper for this word (cf. l. 2), but here the sense can scarcely be expressed in English except by a passive form. Certainly it would be an undue liberty to supply *לָמָּה* from l. 11, as Kliefoth and Köhler do. The South and the Lowland (Schiefer), were well defined geographical divisions of Palestine from the time of the Conquest (cf. in Hebrew, Josh. x. 40, xv. 21, 31; Smith, *Dict. Bib.*, 2291, 2296).

Vers. 8-14. Here the prophet reminds his people that the Lord required something else than formal fastings, and that the disobedience of the fathers was the cause of their ruin.

Ver. 9. Thus spoke Jehovah, etc. The connection requires that the first verb should be rendered strictly in the preterite, and not as the E. V. in the present. Judgment of truth is that which is founded upon the actual facts in the case without regard to personal considerations (Eck. xviii. 8). Kindness and pity are related as genus and species, the latter being kindness shown to the unfortunate.

Ver. 10. And widow and orphan, etc. This verse specifies some of the chief ways of violating the preceding requisition, and shows that it covers the thoughts of the heart as well as the acts of the members. The singular occurrence of *וְיָתוֹם וְיָתוּבָה*, after a noun in the construct, is explained by Gen. ix. 5, where it stands appositionally, = the man who is his brother. Henderson violates all grammar by rendering (after the LXX.), "think not in your heart of the injury which one hath done to another." The Vulgate would have been a better guide, *nulum vir fratri suo non cogitat in corde suo*.

Ver. 11. But they refused . . . to hear. The figure offered a rebellious shoulder (Neh. ix. 29), is taken from the conduct of an ox or heifer, refusing the yoke. Cf. Hos. iv. 16.

Ver. 12. And they made, etc. Adamant is a better translation for *יָדָה* than *diamond* (Pressel, Köhler, etc.), because it suggests only that point for which the term is introduced, namely, its impenetrable hardness. The relative refers to both the preceding nouns, but there is no warrant for giving to the law any but its strict and usual sense. This clause well expresses the two factors in all divine revelation, the guiding Spirit and the inspired instruments. The last clause expresses the result of the disobedience and obduracy of the people.

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, etc. This verse contains a sudden change in the form of the address. The protasis is in the words of the prophet, but the apodosis, so they call, etc., introduces Jehovah as the speaker, and He continues to be such until the second clause of the concluding verse. The sentiment echoes the last words of the first chapter of Proverbs:

Ver. 14. And I will whirl them, etc. I prefer the rendering, whom they know not, of the E. V., following the LXX., to the other, "who knew not them," adopted by most critics after the Vulgate. In either case the sense is clear, namely, that they

would fall into the hands of those who being total strangers were the less likely to show compassion. Goes out or comes in, literally, goes away and returns again, is an idiomatic phrase, first found in Ex. xxxii. 27, for passing to and fro. Its negative prevents a sad picture of entire desolation. The pleasant land is a familiar designation of Canaan in its agreeable aspect (Ps. cxi. 24; Jer. li. 19). This final clause states the result, and to give it its full effect, requires the parenthetical insertion of so in the version. Thus it is made plain that all the calamity which is bewailed on the fast days was brought on by the sinful obduracy of those to whom "the former prophets" spoke by the Spirit, but alas, spoke in vain.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The question of the Bethelites indicates very clearly the wretched formalism into which the people had degenerated. The fasts about which they inquired were not of divine appointment, and had no hold upon the conscience. The same authority which originated them could of course discontinue them. The question itself, as well as the motives from which it sprang, betrayed entire ignorance of the nature and design of Scriptural fasting. It is not an ascetic exercise, and has no intrinsic value whatever. Hence even in the complicated and extensive ritual of the Old Testament, there is mention of only one stated fast — the day of atonement (Lev. xvi. 29), — and that, only by the indirect expression "afflict your souls." In all other cases, and there are very many of them, the service is set forth as strictly *pro re nata*, something springing out of the circumstances at the time, and intended to cease as soon as they ceased. It would seem as if the design was to guard against the very error of the Jews mentioned here, — one that long continued to prevail among them and which centuries afterward was distinctly rebuked by our Lord. At one time the objection was made to him by the disciples of John the Baptist, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast" (Matt. ix. 14, 15). That is, while I am present with my disciples, there is no occasion for any such observance, and if I instituted one, its design would surely be mistaken. Hereafter, circumstances will arise when they will instinctively feel that observances of this kind are called for, and then they will appoint them, and retain them so long as may be necessary. Our Lord does not deny the lawfulness or the expediency of fasting; but He does deny its intrinsic excellence or usefulness. It is an expression of sorrow and humiliation proper to be used on the occasions which call for such feelings; then it is fitted to help the discipline of the soul and to lead to benefits quite beyond itself. Indeed, on such occasions it is a suggestion of nature itself, — nothing being more common than for extreme grief or other mental excitement to take away the appetite for food. But whenever the exercise is made to recur steadily at regular intervals without regard to circumstances, its inevitable tendency is to degenerate into a barren form and a mischievous self-deception.

2. This error is a serious one. Overstrained

devotion to ceremonial observances is sure to react disastrously upon morals. Men lose the sense of proportion, and lay more stress upon mint, anise, and cummin than upon judgment and mercy; and they compensate for rightness in form by great looseness in substance. Hence, in this chapter, Zechariah, before answering the question proposed, exposes the hollowness of mere outward fastings (vers. 5, 6), and then reminds them of the causes of their fathers' ruin (vers. 11, 12). It was not due to any inattention to ritual, but to the disregard of the plainest duties of justice and humanity. They had not only the law written on the heart, and the law engraved on the two tables of stone, but the express and reiterated injunctions of the Prophets against all injustice and oppression; and yet they utterly refused to hear. Their children now were in danger of falling into just the same error. It was true then, as it is now, that no religion is worth anything which does not regulate the life and secure the discharge of social and relative duties. Morality is certainly not piety, but the piety which does not include morality is a mere delusion. It seeks God and insults man.

3. God is represented in Scripture as the guardian of the weak. Widows and orphans, the strangers and the poor, they who are especially exposed to ill treatment, are placed under his powerful protection. To them He makes the most precious promises, while upon their oppressors He denounces the heaviest woes. This feature characterizes the Mosiac legislation, so often thoughtlessly denounced as harsh; it is renewed in the older Prophets before the Captivity, and now reappears again in the closing accents of Old Testament inspiration (cf. also Mal. iii. 5). In respect to these classes, the later dispensation is no advance upon the older, except in the higher sanction contained in the words and works of God manifest in the flesh. One of the surest tests of an intelligent Christianity as well as of a high civilization, is found in the provision made and maintained for those who so often are the victims either of cruel neglect, or, alas, willful oppression! Men need to be continually reminded that such provision is a dictate not merely of reason and humanity, but of Him who has proclaimed Himself the judge of the widow and the helper of the fatherless, who preserveth the stranger, and who hath chosen the poor of this world to be the heirs of his kingdom (Ps. x. 14; lxxvii. 5; cxlvi. 9; Jas. ii. 5).

4. The most terrible penalties are penalties in kind. Such as the drunkard pays when at last he feels himself the slave of a vicious habit which he knows is ruining body and soul, and yet he is unable to throw off; or the licentious man when desire survives the power of gratification, and he is tortured by appetites for which exhausted nature has no provision. Similar is it in matters of religion. God calls and men refuse to hear. From the days of Enoch down this has been a common experience. — Sometimes a judgment falls or wrath is executed speedily. — But ordinarily the retribution comes in the life of the sinner. Men awake at last to their true situation, and become alarmed. Then the same process begins as before, with the parties reversed. Men call, but they are not heard. They seek, but do not find. — They knock, but no door is opened. There is a painful reminder of the words of the wise man: "They shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices" (Prov. i. 31).

"Hays we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet,  
Oh, let us in, though late, to bless his feet!"  
"Na, na, too late! ye cannot enter now."

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

WORDSWORTH: Zechariah's typical and prophetic visions are succeeded by practical instructions. All theological mysteries are consummated in Soliness and love. The Jews did well to fast, but not to boast of their fasting and self-mortification. Here is a symptom of that Pharisaical reliance upon outward works of religion, which reached its height in our Lord's age (Matt. vi. 16) and became almost as detrimental to vital piety as idolatry had been in the age before the Captivity. Your fasting was not produced by a deep sense of shame and remorse for sin, as hateful to me and as the cause of your punishment from me. It was not a fast of sorrow for my offended majesty, but for your own punishment. It was not a God-ward sorrow, but a world-ward sorrow (2 Cor. vii. 10).

TILLOTSON: A truly religious fast consists in (1.) The afflicting of our bodies by a strict abstinence that so they may be fit instruments to promote the grief of our minds. (2.) In the humble confession of our sins to God. (3.) In an earnest

deprecation of God's displeasure. (4.) In intercession for such spiritual and temporal blessings upon ourselves and others as are needful. (5.) In alms and charity to the poor. (6.) In the actual reformation of our lives.

MOORE: All stated fasts tend to degenerate into superstition, unless there is some strong counter-acting agency. The original reference to God is lost in the mere outward act. This is the case with Popish observances of the present day. Selfishness is the bane of all true piety, as godliness is its essence. Warnings of punishment when no signs of it are seen, are often disregarded. They who cherish hard hearts must expect hard treatment. The harder the stone, the harder will be the blow of the hammer to break it. They who will not bear the burden of obedience, must bear the burden of punishment.

HENOSTENBERG: The Jews' estimate of the value of fasting. A custom which had no meaning, except as the outward manifestation of a penitent state of heart, was regarded as having worth in itself, as an *opus operatum*. It was supposed that merit was thereby acquired; and surprise and discontent were expressed that God had not yet acknowledged and rewarded the service of so many years.

#### 2. THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE. THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

A. *General Promises and Precepts* (vers. 1-17). B. *Fasts shall become Festivals, and whole Nations be added to the Jews* (vers. 18-23).

#### CHAPTER VIII.

- 1 And the word of Jehovah of Hosts came to me,<sup>1</sup> saying,
- 2 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
I am jealous<sup>2</sup> for Zion with great jealousy,  
And with great fury I am jealous for her.
- 3 Thus saith Jehovah, I am returned to Zion,  
And will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;  
And Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth,<sup>4</sup>  
And the mountain of Jehovah of Hosts the holy mountain.
- 4 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
Yet shall there sit<sup>5</sup> old men and old women in the streets of Jerusalem,  
Each having his staff in his hand for very age;<sup>6</sup>
- 5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls,  
Playing in the streets.
- 6 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
Because it will be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this nation in those<sup>7</sup>  
days,  
Shall it be marvelous in my eyes also? saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 7 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
Behold, I save my people from the land of the rising,  
And from the land of the setting of the sun;
- 8 And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,  
And they shall be my people and I will be their God,  
In truth and in righteousness.
- 9 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts  
Let your hands be strong,  
Ye who hear in these days these words,



- From the mouth of the prophets who spake<sup>1</sup>  
On the day the house of Jehovah of Hosts, the temple,<sup>2</sup>  
Was founded, that it might be built.
- 10 For before those days there was no wages for a man  
And no wages for a beast,<sup>3</sup>  
And no peace to him that went out or came in, because of the oppressor;  
And I set<sup>10</sup> all men, each against his neighbor.
- 11 But now not as in the former days am I  
To the remnant of this people, saith Jehovah of Hosts.
- 12 For<sup>11</sup> there shall be a seed of peace,<sup>4</sup>  
The vine shall yield its fruit,  
And the earth shall yield its produce,  
And the heavens shall give their dew,  
And I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these.
- 13 And it shall be, that as ye were a curse among the nations,  
O house of Judah and house of Israel,  
So will I save you and ye shall be a blessing;  
Fear not, let your hands be strong.
- 14 For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
As I thought to do evil<sup>12</sup> to you when your fathers provoked me,  
Saith Jehovah of Hosts, and I repented not;  
15 So have I thought again<sup>13</sup> in those days  
To do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah,  
Fear ye not.
- 16 These are the words which ye are to do;  
Speak truth, each to his neighbor;  
Truth and judgment of peace judge ye<sup>14</sup> in your gates.
- 17 And let none of you devise the evil of his neighbor in your hearts,  
And love not an oath of falsehood;  
For all these<sup>15</sup> are what I hate, saith Jehovah.
- 18-19 And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
The fast of the fourth (month); and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh,  
and the fast of the tenth, shall become pleasure and joy to the house of Judah  
and cheerful feasts; but love ye truth<sup>16</sup> and peace.
- 20 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
It shall yet<sup>17</sup> be that peoples<sup>18</sup> will come,  
And the inhabitants of many cities;  
21 And the inhabitants of one (city) shall go to another, saying,  
Let us go speedily to entreat Jehovah<sup>19</sup>  
And to seek Jehovah of Hosts.  
I will go also.
- 22 And many peoples and strong nations shall come  
To seek Jehovah of Hosts in Jerusalem,  
And to entreat Jehovah.
- 23 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,  
In those days it shall come to pass  
That ten men of all languages of the nations shall take hold;  
Even shall take hold of the skirt of a Jew,  
Saying, we will go with you,  
For we have heard that God is with you.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1. — The word <sup>וְנָבִיא</sup> wasOng in the Masoretic text, is found in numerous MSS and several editions, and is supported by the Syriac and Targum.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 2. — "I am jealous," not as E. V., "I was." The Hebrew tense here seems to be — the Greek perfect, in the sense "I have been and still am."

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 3. — The city of truth, not a city as E. V., but one prominent in this respect.

6 Ver. 6. — **קָשָׁה**. The literal meaning *is* both more accurate and more expressive than the derived sense *difficult* adopted in the R. V. from the Vulgate.

7 Ver. 6. — "Very ago." This asaphism is better than the literal "abundance of days" in margin of R. V.

8 Ver. 6. — **קָשָׁה**, according to usage, must be rendered *those*. So Dr. Riggs (*Suggested Emendations*), who however is not happy in suggesting the marginal rendering of the R. V. as preferable to the textual, in the case of the verb in this clause. The literal sense of **קָשָׁה** is to be singled out, distinguished, wonderful, and the word here expresses something not only *difficult*, but so difficult as to be marvelous or incredible.

9 Ver. 9. — **וְהָיָה** requires a verb to be supplied. Some suggest **בָּרָא**, but **וְהָיָה** seems better.

10 Ver. 9. — The grammatical construction here is awkward, yet better than R. V., which seems to imply a difference between the house of Jehovah and the temple.

11 Ver. 10. — The feminine suffix in **וְהָיָה** refers to the nearer preceding noun.

12 Ver. 10. — In **וְהָיָה** the *vav* convers. takes Pattach in conformity to the compound Shema which follows (*Grass II. (2), 1001*).

13 Ver. 12. — Kell renders **כִּי** *but*, but the usual signification for *is* as suitable and idiomatic.

14 Ver. 11. — **לְהָרַע** is in contrast with **לְהַחֲיִיב** in ver. 15, and they should be so rendered — *to do evil and to do good*; whereas R. V. gives the former as *punish*, and Henderson *afflict*.

15 Ver. 15. — **שָׁבָרָהּ** — again. See on 5. 1, vi. 1.

16 Ver. 16. — **מִשְׁפָּט — שֹׁפֵט**. To render this "Executive judgment" (R. V., Henderson), is misleading, for the word expresses the pronouncing, not the executing of judgment. Noyes renders, "Judge according to truth, and for peace," etc.

17 Ver. 17. — **אֶת-עַל-אֵלֶּה** is to be taken as *accus. absol.*

18 Ver. 19. — The R. V. renders the last clause, "love the truth;" and so the German. But both omit the article before "peace," although the Hebrew has it before each noun.

19 Ver. 20. — After **לֹא** we must supply **יְהִי**.

20 Ver. 20. — **עַמִּים** — *peoples*. This plural, found twice in R. V. (*Rev. x. 11, xiv. 18*), should have been used here, and in x. 9; xii. 2, 3, 6, xiv. 12, and often elsewhere, to avoid ambiguity.

21 Ver. 21. — **לְחַלּוֹת**. See on xii. 2.

#### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

In the preceding chapter the Prophet had rebuked the people for their formalism, and set forth the dreadful consequences of disobedience. Now he turns to the other side of the subject and paints an exquisite picture of the results of conformity to the Divine will. Vers. 1-3. The restoration of purity. — Vers. 4-6. Wonderful peace and prosperity. — Vers. 7, 8. Rescue of all captives from every quarter. — Vers. 9-13. General fertility in place of the previous drought and want. — Vers. 14, 15. Future execution of promises as sure as past execution of threats. — Vers. 16, 17. Moral conditions of prosperity. — Vers. 18, 19. Fasts shall become festivals. — Vers. 20-23. Lively statement of the extension of God's kingdom.

The chapter is divided into two parts by the phrase, "And the word of Jehovah of Hosts came to me" (ver. 1 and ver. 18). Each of these parts is again divided into separate utterances by the recurring formula, "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts." The first contains seven of these segments (vers. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14); the second has but three (vers. 19, 20, 23). Jerome justly explains these reiterated references to the Almighty as meaning, "Do not consider these words to be my own, and therefore disbelieve them as coming from a man; they are the promises of God."<sup>23</sup>

(a.) *General Promises and Precepts*, (vers. 1-17). — Ver. 1. And the word of Jehovah, etc. See the same formula, ante i. 7, iv. 8.

Ver. 2. I am jealous . . . for her. For the usage and the sense, see on i. 14. Both passages speak of wrath, but there the *object* of the wrath is stated (the nations), here, the *cause* (Zion). This vehement affection manifests itself in the ways described in the next verse.

Ver. 3. I am returned to Zion. He had forsaken his dwelling-place when Jerusalem was given up to her foes, and Ezekiel had seen in vision the glory of Jehovah departing (xi. 23). Now he would return, and in consequence, the city would be called the city of truth, i. e., where truth is found, and Moriah the holy mountain; which does not mean that they would actually bear these names, but that they would deserve them as expressing their real character. The strict fulfillment of this promise must be referred to the Messianic period.

Vers. 4, 5. Yet shall there sit, etc. This beautiful picture represents the extremes of life as dwelling in all security and happiness in the midst of Jerusalem. Long life and a multitude of children were ordinary theocratic blessings (*Ex. xx. 12; Deut. vii. 13, 14; Ps. cxviii. 3-5*), and this promise must in part at least relate to the period between Zerubbabel and Christ. There is a curious verbal coincidence in the words of the author of 1 Maccabees (xiv. 9), describing the peaceful prosperity which prevailed in Judaea under the rule of Simon: "The ancient men sat all in the streets, concomming together of good things, and the young men put on glorious and warlike apparel." But the full realization has been seen "only under a later economy."

Ver. 6. Because it will be marvelous, etc. The Lord confirms their faith in his words by reminding them that what seemed incredible to them was not therefore incredible to Jehovah. The common explanation of the second clause, supposes **וְהָיָה** to stand for **וְהָיָה**, as in 1 Sam. xxii. 8, and the question to imply a negative answer. This is simple and pertinent, especially if we, like the R. V., render **וְהָיָה** *these*, instead of *those*, which is

his customary sense as denoting the further demonstrative. But even according to the rendering, in those days, i. e., when this shall come to pass, the sense is better than with Köhler to make the second clause an affirmation, and explain the passage as saying that it would be right for the people to regard it as miraculous, for it would appear such even to Jehovah himself. Remnant of this nation. See Haggai i. 12-14.

Vers. 7, 8. Behold I save my people . . . righteousness. Jehovah will rescue his people from all lands as far as the sun shines, install them again in Jerusalem and renew the old covenant relation. — He their God and they his people (xiii. 9); and this, in the exercise on both sides of truth and righteousness (Hos. ii. 21, 22). Henderson, Köhler, Pressel, *et al.*, refer this to the restoration of the Jews still scattered abroad, but the world is too large to admit of so narrow a restriction, nor is there any historical evidence of any such general return of the *diapora* to Palestine. Jerusalem must stand here as elsewhere for the Messianic kingdom. On the basis of these promises, Zechariah proceeds to encourage the people.

Vers. 9. Let your hands, etc. To have the hands strong — to be of good courage (Judg. vii. 11; 2 Sam. xvi. 21). A reason for this courage is shown in the description of those to whom it is addressed. They are those who hear what the later Prophets say, i. e., in vers. 2-8 of this chapter. These later Prophets (Haggai and Zechariah) had appeared at the time when the foundation of the temple was laid, and the good effects of their activity already to be seen were a pledge of what should follow. It is unnecessary with Hitzig to connect עָז as put for מָזִיץ, but he is happy in the suggestion that the last words of the verse that it might be built, are intended to emphasize the thought that this second founding of the temple (Hag. ii. 15-18), unlike the first (Ezra iii. 10), should issue in the completion of the building.

Vers. 10-12 present the contrast between the present and the former times.

Ver. 10. Before those days, namely, in which work on the temple was resumed. No wages. The labor of man and beast yielded a little result that might be said to be none. There was also an entire absence of internal quiet to him that went out or came in, i. e., men engaged in their ordinary occupations. עָמַל, rendered by the ancient versions as an abstract noun, is made concrete by nearly all the moderns. That this does not refer wholly to a heathen oppressor is made plain by the following clause.

Ver. 11. But now makes vivid the contrast with the opening words of the preceding verse.

Ver. 12. For there shall be . . . peace. This clause is variously construed. Some say, "the seed shall be secure" (Targum, Peshito), or "prosperous" (E. V., Henderson); which is ungrammatical. Others, "the seed of peace, namely, the vine, shall," etc. (Keil, Köhler), and they say that the vine is thus called because it can be produced only in peaceful times; but is not was just as destructive to any other fruit of the earth! I prefer the view of the Vulgate and Pressel given above, a general statement of productiveness of which the following clauses give the details. "Future abundance will compensate for the drought and scarcity of the past" (Jerome).

Ver. 13 runs up all the blessings in a single utterance. As ye were a curse, etc. This does

not mean that they would become a source of blessing to the nations (a view which Pressel urges with great zeal, but manifestly without ground), but as examples of blessedness, and therefore they would be employed in a formula of benediction, just as they had been used for an imprecatory formula (cf. Gen. xlviii. 20; Jer. xlii. 22). — Targum. See on p. 30 a the remark on a similar occurrence of this name in i. 19. It is very significant. "The idea that the ten tribes still exist somewhere in the world, and are still to be restored in their tribal state, has arisen from a misconstruction of those prophecies which refer to the return from Babylon" (Henderson).

Vers. 14-17. The two former of these verses confirm the foregoing promise, and the two latter indicate a condition of its performance.

Ver. 14. And I repented not. Just as the threatening did not fail of its execution, so you may be sure the promise will not.

Vers. 16, 17. These are the words. There is no need of giving in עֲקָרִים the doubtful meaning things (E. V., Henderson), since the ordinary sense words is entirely suitable. These "words" are, just as above in vii. 9, 10, first, positive (ver. 16), then negative (ver. 17). Judgment of peace is such judgment as promotes peace, but this is always founded upon truth. Your gates, as the places where justice was usually administered. The first clause of ver. 17 is curiously reversed in meaning by Henderson: "think not in your hearts of the injury which one hath done to another," — a sense which the Hebrew cannot have. The last clause is very emphatic in the original, lit., "For as to all these things, they are what I hate."

b. Fasts shall become Festivals, and the Nations attracted (vers. 18-23). — Ver. 18. Here begins the second word of Jehovah. See ver. 1.

Ver. 19. The fast of the fourth month, etc. For the fasts of the fifth month and the seventh, see on vii. 3-5. The fast of the fourth month was on account of the taking of Jerusalem (Jer. xxxix. 2); that of the tenth was in commemoration of the commencement of the siege (Jer. lii. 4). All these fasts were to be turned into festivals of joy. But, as Grothius says, that the observance should be retained only with a change of feeling and purpose; but that the general condition should be so happy and prosperous as to render fasting unsuitable. The last clause reminds them of the condition upon which these promises were suspended.

Ver. 20. Yet shall it be that, etc. The position of yet renders it very emphatic, as if to say, Notwithstanding all past desolations, this shall surely come to pass. Peoples, that is to say, not individuals merely, but entire nations. The connection, apparently dropped at the end of this verse, to allow the mention of the reciprocal summus in the next verse, is resumed with the same (וְכָל) in ver. 22.

Ver. 21. And the inhabitants of one city, etc. The mutual appeal stated here greatly enlivens the representation. The emphatic infinitive is very well expressed in the E. V. Let us go speedily, although Prof. Cowles prefers earnestly. The last clause, I will go also, is the prompt response of each of the parties addressed.

Ver. 22. And many peoples, etc. This verse takes up and completes the statement begun in verse 20, by reciting the object of the journey, namely, the worship of Jehovah.

Ver. 23. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, etc.

An important addition. Not only will the heathen go in armies to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah, but they will seek a close and intimate union with the Jews as a nation. **וְהָיָה**, which Henderson says is redundant, is rather emphatic, and the clause is to be construed as the similar one at the commencement of ver. 20. Ten men, a definite number for an indefinite (Gen. xxxi. 7). Each of these ten representative men stands for a distinct nation, since they each speak a different language, as appears from the added clause, of all languages of the nations, where the singularity of the expression seems designed to emphasize this diversity. **וְהָיָה** is simply a resumption of the same verb in the former clause. We will go with you, not merely to the house of God (Hitzig), but in all other ways (3oth I. 18). On God is with you, cf. 2 Chron. xv. 9. Henderson explains all this as fulfilled in the number of proselytes made to Judaism after the restoration. But surely neither "many peoples" nor "strong nations" ever in a body joined themselves to the covenant people. He says that "Jerusalem" cannot be understood otherwise than literally. But most persons will think it cannot be understood in that way at all, for how could such a city contain nations? "That these are said to come to Jerusalem is due to the necessary modes of Jewish thought. That was the only way in which the Jews before Christ could conceive of real conversions, — the only language descriptive of conversion which they could understand. They had not yet reached the idea that God can be worshipped acceptably and spiritually just as well anywhere else as at Jerusalem. Hence those glorious conversions of Gentile nations which are to take place far down in the ages of the Gospel dispensation, if foretold at all by Jewish prophets and for Jewish readers, must be presented in thoroughly Jewish language and in harmony with Jewish conceptions. So we ought to expect to find it throughout the Old Testament Prophets, and so we do find it" (Cowles).

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The beginning and the indispensable condition of all true prosperity is the presence of God. Hence the very first article in the prophet's statement of the happy prospects of his countrymen is Jehovah's assurance, "I am returned to Zion." His absence, strikingly depicted in the vision in which Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord depart from the threshold of the sanctuary, had caused all the woes of Israel, — invasion, conquest, exile, bondage. His return was the only sure pledge of permanent restoration. This, according to the 46th Psalm, is the river the streams whereof make glad the city of God; "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved." God's presence in heaven makes all its bliss, and his presence on earth makes the nearest approach to that bliss. But as He is a God of truth and holiness, they who enjoy his presence must partake of both. Wickedness cannot dwell with Him. As Calvin says, "He is never idle while He dwells in his people, for He cleanses away every kind of impurity that the place where He is may be holy." The proof of his presence, therefore, is not any partial, outward, or transient reform, but the growth and prevalence of holiness founded on truth, **δεδούρηται τῆς ἀληθείας**, Eph. iv. 24.

2. "Longevity and a numerous offspring were specially promised under the old dispensation," but nowhere is that promise so beautifully set forth as

in the scene which Zechariah calls up, — the old man leaning upon his staff, and groups of happy children playing in the streets. No pestilence stalks over the land, no war decimates the population, no famine wastes flesh and strength. The extremes of human life are happy each in its appropriate way, and all that lie between are in the same peaceful condition. The classes which are most exposed and most defenseless being in complete and conscious security, the others in the prime and vigor of their days must needs be exempt from fear and anxiety. All this was the more impressive to the prophet's contemporaries because of its contrast with the days when death came up into the windows and cut off the children from the streets, — when the husband was taken with the wife, the aged with him that was full of days (Jer. ix. 21, vi. 11). There is no need of spiritualizing the description. It serves well in its literal sense to express what is realized already under the beneficent reign of the Prince of Peace, and will become universal and abiding when his kingdom is established over the earth.

3. The chronic sin of human nature is unbelief. Men stagger at the greatness of the divine promises. This is shown not only by the worldly, of whom the standing pattern is that lord in the court of Jehorain, who, when Elisha predicted in the midst of famine a speedy abundance of supplies, exclaimed, If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? (2 Kings vii. 2); but even by the godly, as illustrated in the case of Moses, who, when God engaged to save Israel with flesh for a whole month in the wilderness, incredulously reminded Him that there were 600,000 footmen, plainly implying that the thing was impossible. And yet Moses had seen all the wonders wrought in Egypt. In like manner the restored exiles regarded the glowing statements of Zechariah. They refused to accept them, and so lost the comfort and stimulus they would otherwise have enjoyed. The prophet puts his finger upon the cause of this irrational unbelief, when he suggests that they judged God by themselves, that they measured his power by their own understanding. It is absolutely necessary to raise our thoughts above the world, to bid adieu to human standards of probability, and to keep in mind the infinite excellences of the Most High. There are very many things of which one can only repeat what the Master said to his disciples, — "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. xix. 26). Faith in the divine omnipotence is easy so long as only hypothetical cases are concerned; but when a question of practical duty is involved, and our faith requires us to run counter to all the maxims of worldly wisdom, it is another matter. It is this feature which gave such a heroic aspect to the course of Abraham when "against hope he believed in hope," and for scores of years persevered in the expectation of an event which was naturally quite impossible, just because he was "fully persuaded that what God had promised he was also able to perform" (Rom. iv. 21). It is needful always to remember that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, but as high above them as the heavens are high above the earth. Faith, therefore, always has abundant warrant. The trouble is that so many, like Thomas, want to see first, and then believe. But the special, peculiar blessing is for those who, without seeing, believe what God says, just because He says it.

4. The argument *a fortiori* is proverbially strong, and as it is here presented by the prophet, offers



great encouragement to weak faith. God reminds Israel that the wrath incurred by their fathers had been actually visited upon them, no repentance on God's part interposing to avert the blow. Even so should it be with his purposes of mercy; and thus, the very sorrows of the past become pledges for the hopes of the future. The Most High does not willingly afflict, He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; yet when the limit of forbearance is reached, He executes the fierceness of his anger, and his threatenings are verified to the letter. Every Jew saw this in the deep furrows the Chaldean conquest had imprinted on his native land. But if Jehovah carried out his purposes so effectively in the strange work of judgment, how much more would He in the kind, congenial work of beneficence and blessing? If the word of justice had such a complete and ample verification, would not the word of mercy be still more signally illustrated and confirmed? In this view even the gloomy desolation of the Dead Sea and the ruins of Nineveh and Tyre confirm the faith and hope which expect the world-wide blessings of the latter day. The illustrations of God's severity will be surpassed by those of his goodness.

5. The truest test of religious character is found in the degree of our sympathy with God. If we love what He loves and hate what He hates, then are we his children, and bear his image. Now what God hates particularly is not neglect of outward observances, but all departures from the law of love, — evil acting, evil speaking, evil thinking toward our neighbor. And if we are right-minded we shall shun these things, not for policy's sake, nor even from abstract considerations of propriety, but because they are so offensive to God. "This was what underlay the continence of Joseph under a fierce temptation, — how shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God? And this is the only trustworthy support against the assaults of the adversary. We must have a resolute loyalty to the divine administration; and say with David, "I know, O Lord, that all thy judgments are right," or with Paul, "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." We may, we must have sympathy with our fellows, but first and before all we are to cultivate the same moral affections as our Maker exercises. The farther this culture proceeds, the more acceptable we become to Him and the truer to the best interests of men. It is the more important to emphasize this truth because in our own day there is a persistent attempt in various quarters to introduce in a disguised form the dreadful error which Paul represents (Rom. i. 25), as lying at the root of the gross idolatry and depravity of the heathen world — the worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator. Men reverse the order laid down by our Saviour, and make regard for man the first and great commandment. The "enthusiasm of humanity" is substituted for obedience to God and love to the Lord Jesus, and the sanctions of religion, properly so called, are quietly ignored. Comte's proposed worship of *Le grand Etre*, collective humanity, only put in a concrete form the theoretical principles actuating many who ridiculed this new philosophical religion. He pushed things to their logical result. Yet every page of Scripture teaches that integrity and philanthropy are not piety; and every fresh leaf that is turned in human experience shows that the true love of man is rooted in the love of God, and that no sympathy can be permanently relied upon which is not fed from eternal sources.

6. The lively, dramatic form in which Zechariah

predicts the conversion of the Gentiles, is not worthy. A general movement among the nations the inhabitants of one city running to another with the eager summons to seek Jehovah, "let us go speedily," lest we be too late; the instant answer, "I will go also;" different nationalities crowding around one Jew and seizing even the hem of his garment; all coveting fellowship with the obscure child of Israel, simply because they had heard that God was with him. Nothing could have seemed more unlikely to the contemporaries of the prophet, yet how exactly it has been fulfilled! The whole Roman Empire with the vast multitude of peoples it contained, and very many more who never saw the imperial eagles, have submitted to the authority of a Saviour who was a Jew; all rested their hopes for eternity upon a Jew. Other nations have been centres and sources for philosophy, science, art, literature, law, and government; but in the matter of the knowledge of God, the writings of Jews are the only and universal standard. For centuries past the mightiest intellects and largest hearts of the race have breathed the spirit and studied the words of these living oracles. The Jewish outward polity has disappeared, the nation has been scattered as no nation ever was before or since, a bitter and irrational prejudice against them characterizes a large part of Christendom; and yet the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is recognized as the one supreme Creator and Lord of the universe, in the best thought of the civilized world. And at this day literally men of all nations and kindreds and tribes and tongues are, almost without a figure, laying hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew. They cast in their lot with those whom God chose to be a people for Himself, and are resting their hopes upon that crucified Jew who is the Saviour of the world. All other gods are idols. All other faiths are decrepit. All other religions are forms. The hope of Israel alone has survived the vicissitudes of time and the revolutions of earth, and flourishes in immortal youth, making fresh conquests every day, constantly entering new fields, breaking up the apathy of ages, undermining superstitious bias with the time of a thousand years, and calling forth from the ends of the earth the old cry, Come, let us go speedily to seek Jehovah of Hosts.

#### HOMEILETICAL AND PRACTICAL

MOORE: ver. 2. Men judge God by themselves in interpreting his promises, much oftener than in interpreting his threatenings. — Ver. 17. When God covenants with his people, He also covenants with their children. — Ver. 20-23. All true piety is instinct with the missionary spirit, — desire for the salvation of others.

PRESSER: ver. 23. Shall we delay our missionary efforts until Heathens, Mohammedans, and Jews seize us by the skirt? No, for if that had been the rule, where would we ourselves have been? No, but on the contrary, let us like brutiers seize them by the hand and lead them to the Lord.

Again: No one can be another's leader to the Lord, unless it be perceived that God is with him; but wherever that is plainly seen, men gladly seek such guidance.

JEROME. Shall it be marvelous. Who would have supposed that the same imperial power which destroyed our churches and burnt our Bibles, should now rebuild the former at public expense, in splendor of gold and various marbles, and restore the latter in golden purple and jeweled bindings?

## PART SECOND.

## FUTURE DESTINY OF THE COVENANT PEOPLE.

## CHAPTERS IX.-XIV.

The genuineness of these chapters as a constituent part of the prophecies uttered by the Zechariah who flourished after the Captivity, has been contested since the middle of the seventeenth century. The arguments *pro* and *con* have been considered in the Introduction. According to the traditional and correct view, they contain such further disclosures of God's purposes respecting his kingdom as He was pleased to communicate to his servant Zechariah after what is contained in the previous portion of the book had been recorded. Whether these six chapters were delivered all at once, or were set forth in parts which afterwards were collected by the author into one whole, cannot now be determined. The only apparent mark of division they contain is found in the title prefixed to ch. ix., and afterwards repeated at the beginning of ch. xii. This is used by some to justify a distribution of the contents into two burdens or oracles—a distribution which may be admitted as a matter of convenience and as indicating in general a progress in the order of thought and revelation, but which must not be pressed too closely, since at times the prophet, just as in the case with his predecessors before the exile (Is., etc.), turns upon his steps and resumes matters which have been already treated of. The transitions of the writer are often rapid, and the connection is consequently obscure, but the general drift of this outlook upon the future is plain. Great blessings are in store for the covenant people; sometimes in the shape of victories achieved by them, at others in that of conquests wrought for them. A great deliverer is to appear who unites in himself the seemingly contradictory features found in the earlier Messianic representations; on one hand suffering, rejected, despised, slain; on the other, a mighty king, ruling, however, not by force but by spiritual power, attracting multitudes in penitence and love to his side, and establishing a universal dominion. This, however, is not accomplished without suffering on the part of his people. They make their Shepherd suffer, and in turn themselves are brought under the harrow. They are visited by terrible calamities which purge away the unworthy members of the kingdom. But even the select body, they who are faithful, have fierce conflicts with the outside world. But they are delivered by the wonderful interposition of Jehovah. Then the Gentiles, instead of being destroyed, are converted, and press into the kingdom of God, the limits of which are made coextensive with those of the whole earth.

Such are the leading points of this interesting portion of prophetic Scripture. The particulars will be elucidated, as far as may be, in the detailed exposition.

## A. THE FIRST BURDEN.

## CHAPTERS IX.-XI.

This stretches over the period between the fall of the Persian Empire and the appearance of our Lord. Ch. ix. discloses a series of deliverances for God's people, one of which (vers. 1-8) is wrought by a most destructive visitation upon their present heathen ruler, which falls in desolating strokes upon many of their neighbors, but is effectually warded off from themselves, so that Jerusalem stands like an oasis in the desert. The other describes an actual conflict with an enemy who is named, Javan (= Greece), and who is subdued through the intervention of the Lord going forth with whirlwind and lightning. In consequence, his people shine like the flashing gems of a diadem. Between these two martial scenes, the prophet hails the vision of a lowly, peaceful king, who without arms or arms achieves a bloodless victory, and inaugurates an empire which reaches to the ends of the earth. It would seem as if after the account of the first deliverance, the prophet wished to suggest that this was only an installment of what was to come, and therefore he held up for brief view the glowing picture of the mighty yet peaceful monarch and his world-wide dominion, and then at once turns to remind his readers that there was much to be done on a lower scale before the advent of this peculiar ruler. Ch. x. continues and enlarges the promises with which the previous chapter closed; especially emphasizing the possession of native rulers. In the latter part the speaker passes insensibly to a similar and yet more glorious achievement of God in behalf of his earthly kingdom, one which looks to a far more distant future. Ch. xi. opens a new disclosure, symbolical and mysterious in its form, yet plainly indicating a rejection of the ancient Church because of her rejection of the Good Shepherd, which is described at length, with wonderful vividness of detail and no small degree of dramatic power.

These three chapters will well reward the most patient study, because if their mutual relations and general import be satisfactorily ascertained, great aid is gained for solving the yet more serious difficulties contained in the closing portion of the book. Prophecy, while by its very nature it is lofty and mysterious, is neither arbitrary nor disjointed. It proceeded from one Spirit and has a settled scheme and purpose to the consummation of which all its parts directly tend. Notwithstanding the existence of many variations of *style*, and outward appearance, there is an underlying coherence worthy of the divine inspiration. A single step firmly gained anywhere, therefore, furnishes good hope for what is to follow. The "analogy of faith" is a principle of vast use in doctrinal theology; it is of some the less application in the field of exegesis and especially in that of the prophetic Scriptures.

1. *Judgment upon the Land of Hadrach* (ch. ix., vers. 1-8). 2. *Zion's King of Peace* (vers. 9, 10). 3. *Victory over the Sons of Javan* (vers. 11-17). 4. *Further Blessings of God's People* (ch. x.). 5. *Israel's Rejection of the Good Shepherd* (ch. xi.)

# 1. JUDGMENT UPON THE LAND OF HADRACH.

## CHAPTER IX. 1-8.

- A. *A destructive Visitation befalls Hadrach and Damascus* (ver. 1). B. *It destroys also Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon* (vers. 2-4). C. *The Philistine Cities suffer likewise, but a Remnant is saved* (vers. 5-7). D. *The Covenant People are protected from all Harm* (ver. 8).

- 1 The burden of the word of Jehovah upon the land of Hadrach,  
And Damascus is its resting place;<sup>1</sup>  
For Jehovah has an eye<sup>2</sup> upon man,  
And upon all the tribes of Israel —
- 2 And Hamath also [which]<sup>3</sup> borders thereon,  
Tyro and Sidon, because<sup>4</sup> it is very wise.
- 3 And Tyro built for herself a stronghold,<sup>5</sup>  
And heaped up silver as dust,  
And gold as the mire of the streets.
- 4 Behold the Lord will seize<sup>6</sup> her,  
And smite her bulwark in<sup>7</sup> the sea,  
And she herself shall be consumed by fire.
- 5 Ashkelon sees it and is afraid,  
Gaza also, and trembles exceedingly,  
And Ekron, for her hope is put to shame,<sup>8</sup>  
And the king perishes from Gaza,  
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.<sup>9</sup>
- 6 And a mongrel<sup>10</sup> dwells in Ashdod,  
And I cut off the pride of the Philistines.
- 7 And I take away his blood out of his mouth  
And his abominations from between his teeth;  
And even he<sup>11</sup> remains to our God,  
And he becomes like a prince<sup>12</sup> in Judah,  
And Ekron like the Jebusite,
- 8 And I encamp for my house against<sup>13</sup> an army,<sup>14</sup>  
Against him that goeth hither and thither,<sup>15</sup>  
And no oppressor shall come over them any more,  
For now I see with mine eyes.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

- 1 Ver. 1. — מְנוּחָתוֹ = resting-place, permanent abode.  
2 Ver. 1. — עֵינַי אֶדָּם, *gen. obj.*, as eye upon man. So LXX. and most critics.  
3 Ver. 2. — Before הַבְּקָל we must supply הָאֵשֶׁר. The latter half of ver. 1 is parenthetical. "Hamath also," &c. as well as Damascus, is a resting-place of the burden.  
4 Ver. 2. — כִּי takes its usual sense, *because*. To render *although* is senseless as well as needless.  
5 Ver. 3. — The periphrasis לִי בְּיָדָאֵל cannot be reproduced in English.  
6 Ver. 4. — אֶרְשָׁנָה is *not* will disposers (Borg., Hend.), *not* impoverish (Hitzig, Ewald), *not* deliver up (Heng., Klofth), but *seize, conquer*, as in exactly similar connection, Josh. viii. 7, xvi. 12 (Maurer, Köhler).  
7 Ver. 4. — בָּיָם. *In*, *not into*, as Henderson and Noyes render.  
8 Ver. 5. — הוֹבֵשֶׁת. Here, as elsewhere (Jer. ii. 26), the Hiphil takes a passive sense: the subject of the verb is not Ekron (as some editions of the R. V. punctuate the clause), but הַבְּקָל.  
9 Ver. 6. — מְנוּחָתוֹ. *Mongrel* is a better, because more significant rendering than *alien* (Gesenius, Strongs), adopted by most critics, after the LXX. ἀλλογενής. Dr. Van Dyck, in the *Arabic Bible*, gives (نمير) = *barbarian*.

16 Ver. 7. — נִשְׁאָר נִשְׁאָר. The E. V., *As that remaineth*, is not warranted by grammar nor by the connection.

17 Ver. 7. — "Prince," literally, tribe-prince or head of a thousand, a Peetateuch word.

18 Ver. 8. — כִּי, lit., *because of*, here *in* = *against*.

19 Ver. 8. — מִקֶּבֶץ. The Keri undoubtedly gives the true text, מִקֶּבֶץ, nor is there any need of adopting the vowel changes proposed by Ortenberg and Ewald.

20 Ver. 8. — מִלְכָּר וּמִשָּׁב, the same phrase that occurs in vii. 14, where, however, the connection requires a variation in the rendering.

### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 1. **The burden of the word.** The ancient interpretation of מִשְׁכָּל, = divine declaration, oracle, or vision (LXX., Vulgate), has been adopted by most modern interpreters (Coccinus, Vittinga, Gesenius, Ewald, Fürst); but the other, = minatory prophecy (Targum, Aquila, Peshito), has been accepted by Jerome, Luther, Calvin, Umbreit, Kliefoth, Pressel, and has especially been vindicated by Hengstenberg (*Christology*). *Burden* is the admitted meaning of the word in other connections; it is never joined with the name of God, or of any other person but the subject of the prophecy; and undeniably is in most instances prefixed to a threatening prediction. See Isaiah xxii. 1, xiv. 28, xv. 1, etc., and especially Jeremiah xxlii. 33 ff. The phrase, "burden of the word of Jehovah," is peculiar to the post-exile prophets (xii. 1, Mal. i. 1). The land of Hadrach is a very obscure *ἡμετέριον*. Pressel recounts no less than seventeen different explanations of it. They may be thus classified: (1.) It is the name of an ancient city or land (Theodoret Mops., Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Pressel), but this has arisen from a confusion of the word with Edrei. (2.) An appellative noun denoting the South (Targum), or the surrounding region (Jun. and Tremellius), or the interior (Hitzig), or the depressed region = Cælo-Syria (Maurer). (3.) A corruption of the text is assumed, מִדְּרָחַ for מִדְּרָחַ = *Adporetis* (Ortenberg, Olshausen). (4.) The name of a Syrian king (Gesenius, Bleek, Vaihinger, Fürst). (5.) The name of a Syrian god (Movers, Van Alphen). (6.) It is a symbolical name, like Ariel (Is. xxix. 1), Rahab (Ps. lxxxvii. 4). This, the oldest interpretation (Jerome, Ruschi, Kimchi), is sustained by the fact that the others are all purely conjectural. No such name as Hadrach is now or ever has been known. The translators of the LXX. and Vulgate were ignorant of it. All the other proper names in the passage are well understood; this one, the first, has resisted the efforts of the acutest scholars to give it any historical identification. We must, therefore, either say that it denotes a region now unknown, near Damascus, which is surely most unlikely in a country so long and thoroughly known as northern Syria; or else give it a figurative meaning. Assuming the latter, Hengstenberg, Kliefoth, Keil, after Calvin, explain it as a compound term denoting *strong-weak* or *harsh-gentle*,<sup>1</sup> which the prophet employs as a mystical designation of the Persian Empire, which for prudential reasons he was unwilling to specify more distinctly, the epithet meaning, that the land now strong and mighty shall hereafter be humbled and laid low. The subsequent statements are then only enlargements or specifications of the general censure directed against the great empire under

which the Jews were now in subjection. Its resting-place. This clause commences the detail of the several parts of the whole designated as Hadrach. The burden is to abide permanently upon Damascus. Its native rule, which ceased on the Great Conquest, was never afterwards recovered. Has an eye, etc. Man, here, as in Jer. xxxii. 20, signifies the rest of mankind as contrasted with Israel. The latter half of the verse gives the reason of the former, namely, that God's providence extends over the whole earth, and He therefore cannot allow the existing disproportion between his people and the heathen to continue permanently. Some (Kimchi, Calvin, Henderson) render "the eye of man," *gen. subj.*, as E. V., but this requires an unusual rendering of יָד, and besides, does not suit the context.

Ver. 2. **And Hamath also.** Hamath, the Greek Epiphania on the Orontes, shall also be a resting-place of the burden. Nearly all expositors concur in construing the last two words as a relative clause. Hamath and Damascus are closely connected as together representing Syria. Contiguous in territory, they were alike in doom. From them the prophet turns to Phœnicia. Tyre and Sidon is = Tyre with Sidon, as the following verb in the singular shows. Tyre was a colony of Sidon, but the daughter soon outstripped the mother, and as early as Isaiah's time the elder city was viewed as an appendage of the younger. Because it is. There is no need of giving to the conjunction, the rare and doubtful meaning, *although* (Calvin, Henderson, E. V.), since its normal sense suits perfectly. Tyre was very wise, as the world counts wisdom, multiplying wealth and strength, and trusting in them; but this very pride of earthly wisdom brought the divine retribution (Ezek. xxviii. 2-6. Cf. 1 Cor. i. 19, 27).

Ver. 3. **Describes the resources of the insular city.** The stronghold doubtless refers to the immense double sea-wall which made the place apparently impregnable. For her vast accumulations of wealth, see Is. xxiii. Ezek. xxvii. מְרִירָה — *shining*, is simply a poetical name of gold.

Ver. 4. **Jehovah will seize.** An earthly conqueror may perform the work, but the ultimate agency is the Lord, who beholds and controls all things. **Her bulwark.** It is of little consequence whether מִלְחָה be rendered *rampart*, or *might*, so long as in is not converted into *into*. The point of the clause is that the insular position, which apparently rendered the city invincible, should feel the weight of Jehovah's hand, and prove no protection. The prodigious power and wealth of the Tyrians, and their utter overthrow, are among the most familiar of historical truths.

Ver. 5. **The prophet turns to Philistia.** Ashkelon again, etc. A vivid description of the effect of the fall of Tyre upon the cities on the coast

<sup>1</sup> Pressel derives this view, saying, *Diese etymologischen Versuche sind in der That auch Bräute, gar so schön und*

*gar so zart, gar so stark und gar so schön. But where all are groping in the dark, ridicule is scarcely in place.*



southward (cf. Is. xxiii. 5). Only four of the Philistina capitals are mentioned, Gath being omitted, as in Amos, i. 6-8, Jer. xxv. 20, Zeph. ii. 4. The omission seems due to the fact that Gath, after being dismantled by Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6), sank into political insignificance. "Sees" is to be supplied after Gaza, and both "sees" and "fears" after Ekron. The king, in Hebrew, lacks the article, and the sense is not simply that the reigning king perishes, but that Gaza henceforth has no king. Of course, such monarchs as it had at this time, were only vassal kings. **וַיִּשָּׂא**. Hengstenberg strenuously contends against the common passive rendering, but apparently without reason. He (with Ewald and Köhler) renders, it shall sit or remain, in opposition to passing on or passing away. But compare Isaiah xlii. 20, where the verb is used as exactly parallel with **וַיִּשָּׂא**. (J. A. Alexander in loc.)

Ver. 6. And a mongrel dwells. **מִקְרָא**. A word of uncertain origin, which occurs in only one other place in Scripture, namely, Deut. xxiii. 3, where it means *bastard*. The rendering in the version is from Fürst (*Dictionary*), who deduces the verb from an assumed root, signifying to *mix the seeds*. It is used in the text to denote a person of blemished birth. Ashdod should lose its native population, and have their place supplied by a mongrel brood. The pride of the Philistines, i. e., all that constitutes their pride. This clause resumes what precedes in relation to the several cities, and applies it to the nation as a whole. In the next verse a further advance is made, and the conversion of the people is set forth.

Ver. 7. And I take . . . blood. The singular suffixes refer to the ideal unity in which the Philistines are conceived of as a single person. See a similar case in ch. vii. 2, 3. The blood mentioned is that of sacrifices, which the heathen sometimes drank, and the abominations = not idols, as if he were going to hold on to them *mordicus* (Hengstenberg), but idolatrous offerings. The whole clause strikingly depicts the abolition of idolatry. The rest of the verse sets forth what comes in its place. And even he, i. e., the nation of the Philistines regarded as a person. To our God = the God of Israel. They shall become his worshippers.

Like a prince, a tribe prince. **הִנֵּנִי** is a denominative from **הָנָה**, and denotes the head of a thousand (cf. Micah, v. 2). In the earlier books it is applied only to the tribe-princes of Edom, but is transferred by Zechariah to the tribal heads of Judah. The remnant of the Philistines is to become like a *chiliarch* in Judah. The statement is completed by the final clause. And Ekron. This is mentioned not in and for itself, but simply to individualise the declaration; any other city would have answered as well. Like the Jebusite, i. e., like the ancient inhabitants of Jebus, who became incorporated with the covenant people and shared all their privileges. See the case of Arahah, 2 Sam. xxiv. 18.

Ver. 8. Not only shall a judgment fall on the neighboring heathen and the remnant of them be converted, but the Lord will carefully protect his own people. And I encamp for my house. House, dat. comm., stands for people or family of God (Hos. viii. 1). An army is more precisely defined in the next clause as passing through and returning, i. e., marching to and fro. No oppres-

sor, such as Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon. For now I see = am exercising my providential control "In the estimation of men of little faith, God sees only when He is actually interfering." (Hengstenberg). But in fact He sees all the time.

"There can be no doubt that we have here a graphic account of the expedition of Alexander the Great as is consistent with the permanent distinction between prophecy and history." (Hengstenberg). The capture of Damascus, of Tyre, and of Gaza, are well-known historical facts; and they carry with them assurance that there was also a fulfilment of the prediction in reference to Hamath and the other cities of Philistia, of the fate of which we have no express account. This fulfilment, however, was manifestly only in part, inasmuch as the incorporation of the Philistines with Israel did not take place until a later period. On the other hand, the attempt of the so-called later criticism to refer the passage to the conquests of Uzziah mentioned in 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7, completely fails; because Uzziah did not attack Damascus and Hamath nor Tyre, which are here mentioned, while he did subdue other neighboring heathen, Edomites, Arabians, Moabites, who are not mentioned. The rapid celerity of these conquests is most appropriate to the agency of the "he-goat" whom Daniel saw (viii. 5) coming from the west "on the face of the whole earth, and he touched not the ground." All the great captains from Scythia down yield to Alexander in the swiftness and extent of his conquests. Even Tyre, with all its immense advantages and resources, stayed his march for only what was comparatively a short period.

#### DOCTRINAL AND MORAL.

1. The word of the Lord endureth forever. Here is a prediction of a heavy calamity, which falls in succession upon Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, and the sea-coast cities of Philistia; yet the people of God are safe, guarded not by any human power, but by the unseen presence of their God. Even so it came to pass. The Syrian conquests of Alexander the Great fulfilled the prophecy to the letter. After the battle of Issus, he captured Damascus, which Darius had chosen as the strong depository of his wealth, and this opened to him all Coele-Syria. Sidon soon surrendered. Tyre, strong in its position, its defenses, its wealth, and its wisdom, made a stubborn resistance, yet after a seven months' siege was taken and "devoured by fire." Gaza, too, although it was, as its name imports, the strong, was conquered after five months' effort, and destroyed. The whole region fell a prey to the imperious conqueror, but the armies passed and repassed by Jerusalem without doing the least injury. Josephus accounts for this remarkable fact by the statement that when the conqueror drew near the city the high priest went forth to meet him, in his official robes, followed by a train of priests and citizens arrayed in white; and that Alexander was so impressed by the spectacle that he did reverence to the holy name on the high priest's mitre; and when Parmenio expressed surprise at the act, he answered that he had seen in a vision at Dion in Macedonia, the god whom Jaddan represented, who encouraged him to cross over into Asia and promised him success. Afterwards he entered the city, offered sacrifice, and heard a recital of the prophecies of Daniel which foretold his victory, in consequence of which he bestowed im-

portant privileges upon the Jews. (See Hengstenberg, *Genuineness of Daniel*, 224-233; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 60.) The truth of this narrative, although much questioned by Prideaux and others, has of late come to be considered extremely probable, on the ground of both its external evidence and its consistency with the character and policy of Alexander. But there is no doubt whatever of the main fact, that amid the storm of conquest which swept over the entire eastern region, Jerusalem escaped unharmed. The holy city experienced what David said (Ps. xxxiv. 7), "The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear Him and delivereth them." This "Captain of the Lord's host" (Josh. v. 15) kept at bay the otherwise irresistible foe.

2. Bloodshed and carnage prepare the way for the Prince of Peace. The conquest of Alexander had aims and results far beyond any contemplated by himself even in the most extensive of his far-reaching views. He tore down that others might build up. The humiliation of the Syrian powers and provinces was preliminary to their conversion to the true faith. Their cruel and debasing worship disappeared, and the remnant became incorporated with the Christian Church. They exhibited on a small scale what the entire career of Alexander exhibited on the world's broad stage, — a secular preparation for the new and final form of the kingdom of God on earth. Well says Wordsworth, "We speak of the connection of sacred and profane history; but what history can rightly be called profane? What history is there, rightly studied, which is not sacred? What history is there in which we may not trace the footsteps of Christ?" A heathen historian (Arrian) said that Alexander, who was like no other man, could not have been given to the world without the special

design of Providence. But what to Arrian was an inference from a narrow induction is to us a broad fact stamped upon the face of the world's history, and confirmed by the concurrent testimonies of two divine seers, Daniel and Zechariah.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL

WORDSWORTH: Ver. 1. Hadrach is the designation of the powers of this world generally (of which Persia was a specimen), strong for a while and proudly exulting in their strength, and opposing God and persecuting his Church, and in due time to be laid low and broken in pieces by Him. How many Hadrachs are now vaunting themselves as if they were all-powerful! how many are raging against Him, and how terrible will be their downfall!

MOORE: Never has sin more proudly entrenched herself than in godless but magnificent Tyre. Yet all was swept like chaff before the whirlwind of the wrath of God, when the time for the fulfillment of his threatenings had come. Two hundred years passed away after these threatenings were uttered, and Tyre seemed stronger than ever; yet when the day of doom dawned, the galleys that had left her the queen of seas, when they returned found her but a bare and blackened rock, a lonely monument of the truth that our God is a consuming fire. . . . God will not make Himself a liar to save man in his sins.

JAY: *Ekkron*, as the Jebusite. 1. It is a great thing to be a Jebusite. 2. Jebusites may be derived from Ekkrontes. Hence let none despair, either for themselves or for their fellows. God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

## 2. ZION'S KING OF PEACE.

### CHAPTER IX. 9, 10.

#### A. The Character of the King (ver. 9). B. The Nature and Extent of his Kingdom (ver. 10).

- 9 Rejnice greatly, daughter of Zion,  
Shout,<sup>1</sup> daughter of Jerusalem,  
Behold, thy king cometh to<sup>2</sup> thee,  
Just and saved is He,  
Afflicted and riding upon an ass,  
Even upon a colt, the sho-asses'<sup>3</sup> foal,  
10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,  
And the horse from Jerusalem,  
And the battle-bow shall be cut off;  
And he shall speak peace to the nations,  
And his dominion shall be from sea to sea,  
And from the river to the ends of the earth.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 9. — "Shout," E. V., is the exact rendering of שִׁירָה, which means, to make a loud noise; whether of joy or sorrow depends upon the context.

2 Ver. 9. — הֵלֵךְ. Not only to thee, but for thee, for thy good. Cf. Is. lx. 8.

3 Ver. 9. — The E. V., foal of an ass, by making the last noun a singular instead of a plural, misrepresents the emphasis laid upon the youth of the animal as one not yet old enough to go by itself.

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

From the description of deliverance wrought and blessings conferred by means of destructive judgments upon the heathen, the Prophet turns abruptly to a royal personage who is to appear without armies or weapons, and yet will establish general peace and set up a kingdom of unlimited extent.

**Ver. 9. Rejoice.** The value of this blessing is expressed by a summons to joy in view of it. Cocceus justly says, that the summons itself contains a prophecy. Daughter of Zion, see on ii. 7-10. The Prophet says, Behold! as if he saw the animating spectacle, thy king—not any ruler, but *thine*, i. e., the one long promised and expected (Ps. xlv., lxxxi.); he who alone is thy king, in the highest sense of the word.

This king is described by four features of character and condition: (1.) **Just.** The leading virtue in a king, and hence emphasized in the Messianic utterances (Is. xi. 3-5; Jer. xxiii. 5; Ps. xlv. 6, 7). (2.) **Saved.** מִן־כָּל is rendered actively by all the ancient versions (Luther, Grotius, Marekian, Henderson); but the participle is *Niphat*, which, although it may be reflexive, is never active save in verbs which have no *Kal* form. Calvin, Cocceus, and most of the moderns, give the passive rendering. A *tertium quid* has been sought by Hengstenberg, Keil, and others, in the sense *endued with salvation*, but for this I can see no authority in the passages quoted (Deut. xxxiii. 29; Ps. xxxiii. 16). Pressel follows Fürst in rendering *victorious*, which is arbitrary. Nor is there here an *exigentin loci*, as Henderson claims; for the king is saved not for his own sake only, but for his people's, and the blessing, therefore, is not a personal one, but extends to all his subjects. Thus the passive suits the connection. (3.) **Afflicted,** מְצוּר.

The root מְצוּר = to be bowed down, in its primary sense of bowed by outward circumstances = afflicted, gives the adjective found here, but in the secondary sense of inwardly bowed, gives the adjective מְצוּר = meek, patient, lowly. While there is a constant tendency of the two significations to pass into each other, yet the distinction is generally maintained, and מְצוּר is found coupled with מְצוּר, דָּל אֲבִינִי. The E. V. is sustained by the LXX. (*υπαδς*), Targum, Kimchi, and most of the moderns, who cannot see the relevancy of this feature to the character of a triumphant king. But our king triumphs through suffering. His crown springs out of his cross. Hence we agree with the Vulgate (*pauper*), Aben Ezra, Calvin, Cocceus, Hengstenberg, Tholuck, Keil, in considering this one word as summing up the elaborate picture of suffering contained in Is. liii. It is true, Matthew (xii. 5) apparently sustains the other view, but he merely quotes the LXX. as he found it, without endorsing its absolute accuracy in all particulars. Besides, he omits two of the traits mentioned, and dwells only on the last one, for the sake of which his quotation was manifestly made. (4.) **Riding upon an ass.** *Id.*, "upon an ass, even upon a young ass, a foal of she-asses." The *Id.* is exepetential, just as it is in 1 Sam. xvii. 40, "In a sheep-herd's bag, even in a scrip." מִן־כָּל is simply the plural of species. Gen. xxi. 7: "who would

have said that Sarah should give children suck?" Yet Sarah had but one child. In this case the youthfulness of the animal is emphasized, since the expression implies that it was one not yet ridden, but still running behind the she-asses. But what does this trait mean? Must affirm that it points to the peaceful character of the king, as set forth in the next verse. But this does not account for the marked emphasis given to the youth of the animal. It is better therefore (Hengstenberg, Keil, etc.) to regard it as a token of poverty and meanness. The ass was indeed ridden by distinguished persons in the early days of Israel when horses were not used at all; but after the time of Solomon no instance occurs of its being employed on state occasions. That this king should ride not upon a horse but upon an ass, and that an untrained foal, indicated how far he should be from possessing any worldly splendor. The close correspondence between this account and our Lord's entry into Jerusalem is well known; and Matthew (xii. 4) and John (xii. 15) speak of the latter as a fulfillment of the former. And while it is true, as Vitringa says, that the prophecy would have been fulfilled in Christ, even if He had not made his entry into Jerusalem in this manner; still it is apparent that our Lord designedly framed the correspondence which we observe, and that he intended thus to embody the thought which lies at the basis of the whole passage, namely, that the king Messiah would rise through lowliness and suffering, to might and glory, and would conquer the world not by arms but by suffering and dying.

**Ver. 10.** This verse describes the character and extent of the Messiah's kingdom. And I will cut off, etc. Not only will this king extend his reign by peaceful methods, but all the instruments of war will be effectually removed from his people. The chariot, the horse, and the battle-bow are merely specifications, standing for the whole class of offensive weapons, which are to be cut off. This last word is the one used above (ver. 6) in reference to the pride of the Philistines, and denotes extermination. Both passages rest upon Micah v. 10, 11. The Lord will take away all the outward defenses upon which a carnal reliance is placed. The occurrence of the word Ephraim here does not prove that this prophecy was written before the exile, but only that Zechariah uses the familiar designation of the different parts of the country which still survived after the separation of the two kingdoms had ceased. See mention of Israel in viii. 13, the *post exilium* origin of which is admitted by all. *Speak peace*, not that He will *teach* peace, nor *command* peace, nor *speaking peacefully*, but that He will *bring* peace, and that effectually, accomplishing by a single word what worldly kings bring about only by force of arms (cf. Ps. lxxii. 6, 7; Micah v. 5). He will do so not merely to the covenant people, but to the nations at large. This point is further expanded in the boundaries assigned to his sway. From sea to sea, etc. The expressions are borrowed from the statement of Israel's "boundaries" in Ex. xxiii. 31, whence *Isaiah* (Eichhorn, Hitzig) have inferred that they mean simply the restoration of the earthly Israel to its widest geographical limits. But there are changes in the phraseology which compel a different view. Instead of saying, from one particular sea to another, Zechariah leaves out all qualifying epithets and even the articles, so that the first clause must mean, from any one sea to any other, even the most distant, or from any sea around to the same point again. The other clauses

will mean, from the Euphrates, or from any other river as a *terminus a quo*, to the end of the earth. <sup>וְעַל</sup> with the article always means the Euphrates, and probably does so here, but an equivalent sense may be gained by the alternative rendering given above. What is meant is that the kingdom should be strictly universal. Our passage is a reproduction of Ps. lxxii. 8.

**The History of the Interpretation.** The early Jewish authorities held that the Messiah is the subject. Thus the Book of Zohar, "On this account it is said of Messiah, Lowly and riding upon an ass." The same view is given by Joshua ben Levi, Saadiah-gaon, and others. The testimonies may be found in Wéstein on Matt. xxi. 4. Jarchi, known among the Jews as the prince of Commentators, declares that "It is impossible to interpret it of any other than the Messiah." In the twelfth century other opinions prevailed. One found in the Bab. Talmud evaded the difficulty by saying, "If the Israelites are worthy, the Messiah will come with the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 13); if they are unworthy, he will come poor and riding upon an ass (Zech. ix. 9)." Another resorted to the device of two Messiahs, one of whom should be suffering, and the other, triumphant. Yet manifestly it is one and the same person who is described by the Prophet as uniting in himself the extremes of majesty and humiliation, — a combination which on the New Testament view of the case is intelligible and self-consistent, but on any other quite impossible. Aben-Ezra refuted the opinion of Rabbi Moses, the priest who referred the prophecy to Nehemiah, but himself went as far astray by interpreting it of Judas Maccabæus. There were those, however, who adhered to the Messianic interpretation, and resorted to strange expedients to get rid of the implication of weakness and lowliness. One of these was the fable that the ass created at the end of the six days of creation was the same which Abraham saddled when he went to offer Isaac, and which Moses set his wife and sons upon when he came out of Egypt; and that this distinguished animal was to bear the Messiah. Another was that the ass of King Messiah should be of an hundred colors. The more intelligent expositors (Kimchi, Abarbanel, &c.) explained the reference to the ass as a sign of humility. It is supposed that this prophecy in some way gave rise to the foolish statement of Tacitus, that the Jews consecrated the image of an ass in the innermost shrine of their temple, and hence probably arose the calumny upon the early Christians, who were often confounded with the Jews, that they worshipped an ass's head, — a fable which Tertullian takes the trouble to confute (*Ad Nationes*, l. 11).

Among Christians the reference to Christ was uniform until the time of Grotius, who asserted that its first and literal application was to Zerubbabel, but that in a higher sense it referred to our Saviour. This view "excited universal displeasure, and called forth a host of replies, the first of which was written by Bochart." Such a view refutes itself. Later, the rationalists felt themselves pressed by the same difficulty as the Jews. They could easily account on natural principles for the anticipation of a Messiah in glory, but were quite unable in this way to explain the prophecy of a suffering Messiah. They therefore resorted to the Jewish evasions, and sought for somebody else than Christ as the subject. Bauer chose Simon Maccabæus; Paulus, John Hyrcanus; Forberg,

King Uzziah. But the most (Eichhorn, Gesenius, Ewald, etc.) devised the theory of an ideal Messiah, maintaining that this and all other similar prophecies arose simply from the vague expectation that there would appear in the future some great deliverer springing from the Davidic line, who after enduring great personal trials would constitute a righteous government, restore the nation to its old prosperity, and overcome its unjust oppressors. So that what the New Testament considers a distinct prediction of the Messiah is merely a patriotic dream. For a thorough refutation of this preposterous theory, see Hengstenberg's *Christology*, Appendix v. For a brief outline, see Theological and Moral, 3.

#### DOCTRINAL AND MORAL.

1. Here is an unequivocal prediction of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is so declared, as we have seen, by the New Testament. It is confirmed by a very peculiar proceeding on the part of our Lord, — his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, — which was simply exhibiting in symbol what is here expressed in words. It contains striking parallels with other passages unquestionably Messianic; such as the boundaries of the kingdom compared with Psalm lxxii. 8. and the destruction of foes compared with Micah v. 9. But the strongest evidence is found in the contents of the prophecy itself. It presents a person in whom the greatest grandeur, magnificence, power, and influence are associated, without confusion or contradiction, with the greatest humility, gentleness, poverty, suffering, and weakness. No judge, king, or ruler of any sort in all Jewish history ever united in his character or experience these two extremes. None was so lowly, none so exalted. None without arms spoke peace even to his own people, much less to the heathen, and least of all to the entire known world. It is true of only one being in all human history that he had not where to lay his head and rode upon an ass, and yet acquired a limitless dominion over land and sea.

2. What other kings accomplish by force, Zion's king effects without weapons or armies. Our Lord told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." Pilate in surprise said to him, "Thou art a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest [the truth], for I am a king. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37). Truth, the revealed truth of God, is the only weapon this great conqueror employs, and yet with it He has built up the mightiest kingdom the earth has ever seen. It was an unconscious prophecy when the inscription over his cross, *This is the King of the Jews*, was recorded in three languages, indicating the comprehensive and far-reaching extent of the spiritual monarchy thus founded. Christ's followers in different ages have been slow to learn the lesson; and have often invoked the secular arm, but always to their own damage. They that take the sword shall perish by the sword. But the weapons which are not carnal are mighty through God. They have pulled down many a stronghold, have dismantled many an intellectual fortress, and time and again have brought the world's best thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

3. The "later criticism" altogether denies the existence of Messianic prophecies in the sense in which the historical Church has from the begin-



along held that they were contained in the Scriptures. This school maintains that what is called the Messianic idea arises out of the dissatisfaction which men in every age have had with the existing condition of things. Deeming the continuance of this inconsistent with the benevolence of God; they instinctively longed and looked for a regeneration of humanity, when all things would be restored to the state originally designed by the Creator. Hence the classic expectation of a golden age. Moreover, every man is dissatisfied with his own moral condition as well as with that of the race. He is weak and imperfect. He does not live in harmony with what he knows to be true and right. Thence arises the ideal of a perfect man, of one whose whole mode of thought, feeling, and action is in accordance with the highest and purest truth. This is the idea of the Messiah of God. But as no such Messiah is to be found within or around us, it is natural to look for Him in the same future in which we expect the regeneration of society. And the more so as we know by observation how much the advancement of the race has depended upon the appearance from time to time of single persons distinguished by lofty endowments. Now this Messianic idea was developed in a very high degree among the Jews, because they had more of the general spirit of prophecy than other nations. The Hebrew Prophet was a man of genius, enthusiasm, and intense moral energy. His pure reason, illumined of God, enabled him to understand the character of the divine government and foresee events hidden from common eyes. His exalted imagination and sensitive conscience presented to him the visions of God. Thus he foresaw not only the general triumph of truth and the exaltation of Israel, but also the means by which these were to be obtained, namely, the Messiah, which term sometimes means a Jewish King, at others the Jewish people, and in a third class of instances, the better portion of that people. But these predictions were always in their nature subjective; their authors neither had nor thought they had any objective revelation made to them of actions or events in the life of any future historical person. They were great and excellent men, but not directly inspired nor infallible. And all their sayings can be easily explained by the actings of their own minds according to the time and the circumstances in which they were placed.

A detailed refutation of this ingenious argument would be beyond the limits of a Commentary. It is enough to say that the parallel instituted between Ethnic and Hebrew views on the subject does not hold. The former were mere scattered, vague, and individual suggestions respecting the future, and even these, there is good reason for supposing, were mere echoes of the voice of the Old Testament or traditions from the primeval revelation which filtered down through the ages. Among the Hebrews, on the contrary, the idea of the Messiah was the central thought of their Scriptures and the organising basis of their national existence. The statement of it begins with the protevangeliism in Genesis, and passes with a closer definition and a greater development through Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah, and at last terminates with Malachi, who closed the Hebrew Canon. What was at first a promise to the race, limits itself in succession to a nation, to a tribe, to a family. The person set forth is described in turn as a prophet, as a priest, as a king, or as a combina-

tion of any two, or of all three, of these characters; and sometimes as in a state of great humiliation and suffering, and again, as in a position of the greatest power and glory. And the writers all with one consent speak of the conception not as a suggestion of their own minds, but as a disclosure from without or rather from above. Their common formula is, Thus saith the Lord. And it is not possible to reconcile their honesty with the view that they were uttering merely subjective notions. Moreover, the origin and continuance of the nation are traced to the divine purpose of sending a Messiah. For this Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldees, the line of his posterity carefully preserved; Israel kept in Egypt, afterwards put in possession of the promised land, the Mosaic economy instituted, priests and kings and prophets raised up, the nation long maintained, then exiled, and then restored. Their theocratic constitution was not owing to a blind and odious particularism, but was the result of God's wisdom in choosing one race to be the depository of the truth and blessing destined one day to be coextensive with the race. The Jews were trustees for the whole human family. It pleased God to make a gradual and thorough preparation through a long tract of ages for the full and final revelation of his grace. The seed of Abraham was simply the means by which this preparation was accomplished. On this view of their history, all its parts and features are easily understood, and are seen to constitute merely successive stages in the development of God's purpose to bring many sons unto glory through a captain of salvation. On any other view it is a mystery which baffles all thought and comprehension. But what was a mystery before the coming of Christ is an "open secret" under the Gospel, and the key which fits all the wards of the lock must be the right one. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The remarkable correspondence between his life, words, and works, and the hints and promises and types and predictions of the Old Testament, indicate beyond question to any unprejudiced person, a presiding mind which coordinated the two Testaments, and brought about that wondrous harmony of theme and tone which is wholly unexampled in all human literature. And this Messiah objectively revealed is not only the link between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek, but the one great thought which gives purpose, symmetry, and consistency to the entire scheme of the Old Testament.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**MOON:** Ver. 9. Christians should be happy. No people have a better right or a better reason to rejoice. A suffering people can find great comfort in the fact that they have a suffering Saviour (Heb. iv. 15). — Ver. 10. War will cease on the earth only when wickedness ceases, and wickedness will cease only when Christ's universal empire begins.

**WODSWORTH:** It is remarkable that St. John's narrative of the triumphal entry of Christ, riding into Jerusalem on the foal of an ass, is immediately followed by the mention of an incident in the history: "Certain Greeks wished to see Jesus." The entry itself was like a vision of the coming of the Gentile world to Jesus; these Greeks were its first fruits.

**JNO. NEWTON:** Messiah is king of Zion. Happy the subjects who dwell under his shadow. He rules them not with the rod of iron by which

He bruises and breaks the power of his enemies, but with his golden sceptre of love. He reigns by his own right, and by their full and free consent, in their hearts. He reigns upon a throne of grace to which they at all times have access, and from whence they receive the pardon of all their sins, grace to help in time of need, and a renewed supply answerable to all their wants, cares, services, and conflicts.

## 3. VICTORY OVER THE SONS OF JAVAN.

## CHAPTER IX. 11-17.

A. Deliverance promised (vers. 11, 12). B. Name of the Foe (ver. 13). C. Jehovah fights for his People (vers. 14, 15). D. Salvation (ver. 16). E. General Prosperity (ver. 17).

- 11 As for thee also, — for the sake of thy covenant-blood,<sup>1</sup>  
I send forth<sup>2</sup> thy prisoners from the pit wherein is no water.
- 12 Return to the strong-hold,<sup>3</sup> O prisoners of hope,  
Even to-day I declare, I will repay double<sup>4</sup> to you.
- 13 For<sup>5</sup> I bend for me Judah, fill the bow<sup>6</sup> with Ephraim,  
And stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Javan,  
And make thee like the sword of a hero.
- 14 And Jehovah shall appear above them,  
And like lightning shall his arrow go forth,  
And the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet  
And go forth in the storms of the South.
- 15 Jehovah of Hosts shall protect<sup>7</sup> them,  
And they devour<sup>8</sup>, and tread down sling-stones,<sup>9</sup>  
And they drink and make a noise as from<sup>10</sup> wine,  
And become full as the sacrificial bowl,<sup>10</sup> as the corners of the altar,
- 16 And Jehovah their God saves them in that day,  
(Saves) like a flock<sup>11</sup> his people,  
For jewels of a crown shall they be,  
Sparkling over his land,
- 17 For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty!  
Corn makes the young men thrive,<sup>12</sup> and new wine the maidens.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 11. — *בְּדָם*, being in thy covenant-blood = being sprinkled with it. The covenant of Jehovah with his people was sealed with sprinkled blood. Es. xlv. 8. The compound term *covenant-blood* best represents the form and force of the original phrase.

2 Ver. 11. — *שְׁלַחְתִּי* is the common prophetic preterite.

3 Ver. 12. — *בְּצִרְחֹן*, a cut off place, h. inaccessible, fortified, *ἀνεμύνη* (LXX.), *munio* (Vulg.).

4 Ver. 12. — *מִשְׁקָה*. Promised seems to be alone in giving to this word the sense, the second place. The rendering of the E. V. is sustained both by usage and the connection.

5 Ver. 13. — The E. V. needlessly continues here the sentence of the previous verse, and renders *כִּי* when. A literal rendering is at once more forcible and more accurate.

6 Ver. 13. — *רִיבִית*. Some connect this with what precedes, but nothing is gained by departing from the Masoretic interpolation.

7 Ver. 15. — *יִצֵּן* = covers protectingly. Cf. xli. 5.

8 Ver. 15. — "With sling-stones," in the text of E. V., introduces a needless preposition. The marginal rendering is to be preferred.

9 Ver. 15. — *כְּמִרְיֹן* is an abbreviated comparison. Cf. x. 7.

10 Ver. 15. — "Sacrificial bowl." The qualifying epithet must be introduced in order to give the full sense of *קַדִּיחַן*, N. xlv. 20.

11 Ver. 16. — The E. V., "flock of his people," is grammatically impossible.

12 Ver. 17. — *יִנְוֹכֵךְ*. The first marginal rendering of the E. V., *make grow*, is better than its text, *make cheerful*. The word is derived from the sprouting of plants, and evidently refers to a prolific increase. First given to make old point, which is conjectural and inept.

## CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL.

A new scene opens. The prophet turns away from the beautiful picture of a peaceful king extending his beneficent sway over all the earth, to describe a period of distress and weakness, to which, however, he gives a promise of full deliverance, to be gained by actual conflict. This warlike period evidently belongs to a nearer future than the one just described, and the prevalent opinion justly refers it to the Maccabean age. The passage begins with a general assurance of deliverance (vers. 11, 12); the foe is mentioned by name (ver. 13); the Lord fights for his chosen (vers. 14, 15); the result is salvation (ver. 16); this is followed by general prosperity (ver. 17).

Vers. 11, 12 contain a promise of deliverance. As for thee also. The person addressed is the whole nation, as is apparent from the mention of Ephraim and Jerusalem in ver. 10, and of Zion in ver. 13, and also from the phrase "blood of the covenant," which belonged to the twelve tribes; see Ex. xxiv. 8. **עַתָּה**, *even thou*, stands absolutely at the head of the sentence for the sake of emphasis (cf. Gen. xlix. 8), and the sense is, Even though you are in such a forlorn condition, seemingly lost, yet I have mercy in store for you. The ground of this promise is stated before the promise itself, in the peculiar Mosaic expression covenant blood, the force of which is well expressed by Hengstenberg. "The covenant-blood, which still separates the Church from the world, was a sure pledge to the covenant nation of deliverance out of all trouble, provided, that is, that the nation did not make the promises of God nugatory by wickedly violating the conditions He had imposed." Thy prisoners resumes and explains the thou at the opening of the verse. It does not mean "such of the Jews as were still captives in foreign lands" (Henderson, Köhler), but the entire people. The pit without water, an allusion to the history of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 24), denotes not so much a condition of captivity as of general distress. The escape from this condition to one of security and prosperity is predicted under the form of a command, Return to the strong hold. See the same figure in Ps. xl. 2, where the rock and the pit are put in sharp contrast. Since the people had this prospect, they were justly entitled prisoners of hope, a beautiful expression which explains itself. Even to-day, i. e., in spite of all threatening circumstances (Ewald, Hengstenberg). Repay double, namely, double the prosperity you formerly enjoyed. Cf. Is. xl. 2, xli. 7.

Ver. 13. The prophet proceeds to show more particularly how the deliverance just promised is to be effected. It is to be by a glorious victory over their oppressors. The method of this victory is represented by a bold and beautiful figure. Judah is the extended bow; Ephraim the arrow which the Lord shoots at the foe. Israel therefore is to carry on the conflict, and Jehovah to give them success. For I bend for me Judah, i. e., as a bow. The word rendered bend, literally means tread; because a bow was often stretched by setting the foot upon it, this term came into use. Fill the bow. An only one arrow can be shot at a time from a bow, it is full when this is placed upon it. The complete

sense of both clauses is, Judah and Ephraim are bow and arrow in the hand of Jehovah. I stir up, not brandish as a lance (Hitzig, Köhler), which would require the object to be expressed. Javan, the name of the fourth son of Japhet (Gen. x. 2), is the Hebrew word for Greece, usually identified with Ion or Ionia. Some suppose the persons meant by the sons of Zion are the Hebrews held as slaves in Greece (Ewald, Hitzig), who are now incited to insurrection. It is enough to say in reply that the contest here spoken of is manifestly carried on in the Lord's own land. A comparison with Dan. viii. 21 shows that we must regard Greece here as a formidable secular power, the Græco-Macedonian monarchy, especially in its successor in Syria, the Seleucidæ. To refer the passage to the days of Uzziah on account of the mention of Greece in Joel iv. 6 (cf. Amos i. 6, 9), is wholly unreasonable; since that passage does not allude to any conflict with the Greeks, but simply speaks of them as the parties to whom the Tyrians had sold certain Jewish captives. And it is the Tyrians, not the Greeks, who are there censured.

Ver. 14. Will appear above them, because He fights from heaven on their behalf. The remainder of the verse is a poetical description of a battle in the imagery of a tempest. The lightnings are Jehovah's arrows, the thunderblast is the signal of his trumpet, and He Himself marches in a furious storm sweeping up from the great southern desert. Storms of the South (cf. Is. xxi. 1; Hos. xiii. 15) were always the most violent.

Ver. 15. Jehovah shall protect, etc. The Lord not only fights for his people, but is also their shield, covering their heads in the day of battle. And they devour, etc. The image is that of a lion who eats the flesh and drinks the blood of his victim. Cf. Num. xxiii. 24. The figure is vigorous, but need not be called "a heathenish abomination" (Pressel). Tread down sling stones = subdue the enemy, contemptuously styled sling-stones or mere pebbles from the brook. Flesh is to be supplied as the object of devour, and blood as that of drink. The vessel mentioned in the last clause denotes, not any bowl, but one in which the priests catch the blood of a sacrifice. Corners, of course, include the horns which stood upon them. These figures are priestly, and intimate a holy war and victory.

Ver. 16 gives the result of this victory, — salvation. By an exquisite change of figure this is represented as bestowed upon them in the character of the Lord's flock, which at once suggests the peaceful blessings recounted in the 23d Psalm. In the next clause, with a designed antithesis to the sling stones in the previous verse, the prophet compares Zion's sons to jewels of a crown, which sparkle over his land, i. e., Jehovah's. Hengstenberg takes the participle here in the same way as in Ps. lx. 6 = rising up. But, as Kell says, crown stones do not lift themselves up. It is better to take the word in the sense of shining, glittering (Ewald, Maurer, Köhler, Fürst). The reference is to precious gems set in a crown and flashing from the brow of a conqueror as he stalks over the land.

Ver. 17. For how great, etc. The passage closes with an exulting exclamation. The pronouns in the first clause refer to Jehovah (Hengstenberg, Ewald, Pressel), but mean the goodness and the beauty which He bestows (Henderson). This avoids the difficulty of ascribing beauty to the Lord,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> "The beauty of the Lord," in Ps. no. 17, represents a different word (יָפֶה), which, however, is best explained

thus: May the loveliness of Jehovah — all that renders Him an object of affection and desire — be made known to us in our experience. Cf. Ps. xlvii. 4.

yet retains the full force of the apostrophe. Corn and new wine are the customary expressions of abundance (Deut. xxxiii. 28; Ps. lv. 8), and are here rhetorically divided between the youths and the maidens. Copious supplies of food lead to a rapid increase of population. Ps. lxxii. 16. "The drinking of must by young females is peculiar to this passage; but its being here expressly sanctioned by divine authority, furnishes an unanswerable argument against those who would interdict all use of the fruit of the vine" (Henderson). "We know that when there is but a small supply of wine, it ought by right of age to be reserved for the old, but when wine so overflows that young men and young women may freely drink of it, it is a proof of great abundance" (Calvin).

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. Few words are so precious to a devout believer as *covenant*. It suggests thoughts of grace, privilege, and security which are not easily attained in any other way. Our trust for this world, and the next rests not upon voices of nature or conclusions of reason, but upon the promise of God, — a promise which He has chosen to present in the form of a compact with stipulations (and sometimes even when the stipulations were all on one side, Gen. ix. 9), and not only so, but to confirm it by sacrifice. This was vividly set before Israel when the law was given on Sinai. Moses sprinkled the blood of the offerings both upon the altar and upon the people, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words." Now it is true that the Mosaic dispensation was a national compact with the Hebrew people, and that it also contained a complete and absolute rule of human duty, but besides these aspects it was a covenant of grace, representing the merciful provision God had made for the salvation of his people, and in this sense its relation to the Gospel economy was that of sunrise to the blaze of noon. It confirmed the promise made to Abraham, and rendered the believer's hope still more firm and clear, as resting upon an immutable bond. The force of that bond continued unimpaired down through the generations. "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers [only], but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deut. v. 3). Again and again, in times of emergency or doubt, did the Old Testament saints reassure their souls and reanimate their hopes by recurring to that old covenant, "the word which He commanded for a thousand generations" (Ps. cv. 8). They might be involved in gloom and perplexity, and the eye of sense could see no way out; but they knew that God had made with them a covenant ordered in all things and sure, and this was all their salvation, and all their desire. The same blessed assurance continues to believers under the Gospel. Nay, it is stronger now, for we have the blood of a new covenant (Mark xiv. 24), i. e., of a new administration of the old covenant, to confirm our faith. The *covenant blood*, on which the faith of Christians lays hold, is not that of bulls and goats, but of a lamb without spot, not the crimson stream of a typical sacrifice, but that which poured from the gaping wounds of the incarnate Son of God. The compact which has been ratified by such an oblation as was made at Golgotha, is necessarily imperishable. It can never fail. The blood of the cross is the blood of an everlasting covenant (Heb.

xiii. 20). Here the devout soul rests in peace and security. The malice of the world, the roar of Satan, the clamor of conscience, all are still before the thought of the pledged and ratified word of Jehovah. The grass withereth, the flower fadeeth, but the Word of our God abideth forever. The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent.

2. This portion of the chapter presents a remarkable contrast to the two verses which precede it. There we read of an eminently peaceful king under whom all weapons of war are destroyed. Without noise or conflict he quietly extends his dominion till it becomes universal. Here, on the contrary, Judah is the Lord's bow and Ephraim his arrow, and there is a terrible struggle set forth by images taken from the storm, the lightning, and the whirlwind. The language is not an exaggeration of what occurred in the heroic struggle for Judæan independence under the sons of the aged priest Mattathias. That struggle was essentially a religious one. It began in a determined resistance to the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to exterminate the faith of the Jews and impose the impure and idolatrous worship of the Greeks; and although other elements were developed in the course of time, this always was the chief consideration. During the course of it, the "good report through faith" of which the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks (x. 36-39), was obtained by many who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword." The atrocities of heathen persecution roused a flame which was irresistible. Neither Antiochus nor any of his successors on the Syrian throne was able to subdue the zeal of the Jews for their ancestral faith. Again and again the armies of the alien were put to rout in pitched battles, and veterans of many a well-fought field were no match for men who fought for God as well as their native land. The Maccabees really earned the name (*Maccabeus* = hammerer) by which they are now generally known, and although disregarded by the haughty heathen, still they shine as jewels of a crown among all disinterested observers. "None have surpassed them in accomplishing a great end with inadequate means; none ever united more generous valor with a better cause" (Milman). They began with a few personal followers, and they ended with a strong and well-organized nation. The struggle lasted for a quarter of a century (v. c. 168-143), and notwithstanding the unequal resources of the parties, Jehovah of Hosts made feeble Jews like the sword of a hero, while the mailed warriors of Syria were trodden down like the small stones of a sling.

3. For more than one half of the four centuries which elapsed between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New, the history of the Jews is almost a total blank, and of the other half there is much less information to be drawn from Ethnic sources than might have been anticipated. But it is very apparent from many scattered indications that Israel had often occasion to say, "How great is his goodness and how great his beauty!" The population multiplied with a rapidity like that of their forefathers in Egypt. The few feeble struggling colonists gradually emerged into a strong, energetic, and well-organized commonwealth. Their land resumed its ancient fertility. Just as in the palmy days of old, its rocks were



crowned with mould and its sands covered with verdure, and a wide-spread commerce on both seas furnished the conditions of growing wealth. At the same time a spirit of enterprise, or a love of adventure, led many to distribute themselves all over the Roman world, so that there was scarcely a province either in the east or the west, where they were not found in numbers. Still in every quarter, under every form of government, and in the midst of every social system, they retained their national faith and usages with unconquerable tenacity. This was manifested not only by a persistent refusal to amalgamate with the various peoples among whom they lived, but by their regular and liberal contributions to the temple. A curious illustration of the latter is seen in the fact mentioned by Cicero, that Flaccus was compelled to forbid such offerings from the provinces of Asia, because the enormous export of gold affected the markets of the world. Thus even the emigrating Jews contributed to the prosperity of those who remained at home. It is evident then that the statements of increase contained in this chapter and the one that follows were verified to the letter. Parts of the land were as thickly settled as any portions of modern Europe. And notwithstanding all the outward conflicts in which they were engaged, or the suffering they may have experienced from the contentions of rival kingdoms around, "corn made the young men thrive, and new wine the maidens," and the covenant people were preserved in their integrity and distinctness, until He came, for whose appearing they had been appointed and preserved for more than twenty centuries.

#### HOMEILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

**MOORE:** Ver. 11. The covenant love of God and his faithful promises that are sealed with blood are the hope of the Church in time of trouble. — Ver. 12. Let sinners who are also prisoners of hope, turn to the stronghold Christ, ere it be for-

ever too late, and God will give them a double blessing.

**PARKER:** Vers. 11, 12. How wide is the range of God's covenant with man! It extends so far that it forms, as our Lord said to the Sadducees the immutable basis of our hope of eternal life. But if the salvation of this covenant, whether in its older or newer form, is ever to become ours, the first condition and the last is—*Turn to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.* Again: (1) There is no imprisonment without hope, for the covenant-blood speaks louder than our sins, and the Lord can break every fetter; but (2) There is no hope without conversion, for without conversion we are still in the pit without water, and fall short of the stronghold which alone secures return to fellowship with God.

**COWLES:** Ver. 12. It is altogether the way of the Lord to send grief and affliction only in single measure, but joy and blessing in double, weighing out the retributions of justice carefully, and the inflictions of his rod very tenderly; but pouring forth the bounties of his mercy as if He could not think of measuring them by any rule less than the impulses of infinite love!

**WOPDAGEN:** [This learned man spiritualizes the entire passage, but is not quoted here, because, as Hengstenberg says, "While the outward conflict was undoubtedly the prelude of a still grander conflict between Israel and Greece, to be fought with spiritual weapons, it is opposed to all the principles of sound interpretation, to refer the words immediately to the latter."]

**JAY:** Ver. 16. Here we see the dignity of the Lord's people. They are "stones," precious stones, set in the "crown" of the King of kings. Here is also their exhibition; these stones of a crown are "lifted up." They are not to be concealed. Here is also their utility; these stones are to be lifted up "as an ensign upon the land." An oriflamma suspended over the royal tent; designed to attract followers to the cause in which he is engaged.

#### 4. FURTHER BLESSINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

##### CHAPTER X.

A. God sends Blessing, but the Idols Sorrow (vers. 1, 2). B. Blessings upon native Rulers (vers. 3-5). C. Former Mercies restored to Judah and Ephraim (vers. 6-9). D. Messianic Mercies (vers. 10-12).

1. Ask of Jehovah rain in the time of the latter rain;  
Jehovah creates lightnings,  
And showers of rain<sup>1</sup> will He give them,  
To every one grass in the field.
- 2 For the teraphim<sup>2</sup> have spoken vanity,  
And the diviners have seen a lie,  
And speak dreams of deceit;  
They comfort in vain;  
Therefore they have wandered<sup>3</sup> like a flock,  
They are oppressed<sup>4</sup> because there is no shepherd.
- 3 Against the shepherds my anger is kindled,  
And the he-goats will I punish;<sup>5</sup>  
For Jehovah of Hosts visits his flock, the house of Judah,

- And makes them like his goodly horse in war.  
 4 From him the corner-stone, from him the nail,  
 From him the war-bow, from him will every ruler<sup>1</sup> come forth together  
 5 And they shall be like heroes treading down [*i. e., see*]  
 Into the mire of the streets in the battle;  
 And they fight, for Jehovah is with them,  
 And the riders on horses are put to shame.<sup>2</sup>  
 6 And I will strengthen the house of Judah,  
 And the house of Joseph will save,  
 And will make them dwell,<sup>3</sup> because I pity them,  
 And they shall be as if I had not cast them off,  
 For I am Jehovah their God, and will hear them.  
 7 And Ephraim<sup>4</sup> shall become like a hero,  
 And their heart shall rejoice as with wine,  
 And their sons shall see and rejoice,  
 Their heart shall exult in Jehovah.  
 8 I will hiss to them and gather them,  
 For I have redeemed them,  
 And they shall increase as they did increase [*before*]  
 9 And I will sow<sup>5</sup> them among the peoples<sup>6</sup>  
 And in far countries they shall remember me,  
 And with their children they shall live and return.  
 10 And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt,  
 And from Assyria will I gather them,  
 And to the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them,  
 And room shall not be found for them.<sup>7</sup>  
 11 And He passes through the sea, the affliction,<sup>8</sup>  
 And He smites the waves in the sea,  
 And all the depths of the Nile are put to shame;  
 And the pride of Assyria is brought down,  
 And the sceptre of Egypt shall depart.  
 12 And I will strengthen them in Jehovah,  
 And in his name shall they walk,<sup>9</sup> saith Jehovah.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 1. — מְשַׁרְשֵׁשׁ *lit., rain of rain = copious rains.* See Job xxvii. 6, where the words are transposed. — The text of the E. V. gives a singularly inappropriate rendering of the previous noun מְשַׁרְשֵׁשׁ, for what consistency is there between "bright clouds" and heavy showers?

2 Ver. 2. — הִרְתִּים. As this word denotes a peculiar species of idolatrous image, it is best to translate it

3 Ver. 2. — נִסְעָה, *lit., break up, as an encampment, h. to wander* They, *i. e., the people.*

4 Ver. 2. — יֶעֱזֵר *oppressed, sorely afflicted.* The troubled of the E. V. is too feeble. The tense is future, implying that the condition still exists.

5 Ver. 3. — There is a play here upon the two meanings of the word יָצַד, the one to care for, the other to punish; or in general to visit, for good or for ill. Jehovah visits for evil, *i. e.,* punishes, the goats; but visits for good, *i. e.,* cares for, his flock. Keil, Henderson, and Cowles err in saying that the meaning to punish requires to be followed by לֹא פֶה. See Job xxi. 14; Is. xvi. 14. Henderson (following the E. V.) makes the extraordinary mistake of rendering יֶעֱזֵר as a preterite, and claiming the vav before עֵל as a vav conversi. He also renders כִּי = nevertheless, a meaning which it never has.

6 Ver. 4. — מְשַׁרְשֵׁשׁ = ruler, as in Is. iii. 12, Is. 17. Hengstenberg insists upon the original meaning, oppressor, but thinks the harshness implied is directed against foes.

7 Ver. 5. — לְבִישָׁם. The Hiphil takes a passive sense, just as in Is. 6.

8 Ver. 6. — הוֹשִׁעֲבוֹתָם. This anomalous form is best explained as the Hiphil of הוֹשִׁיעַ for הוֹשִׁיעֵם. (Gesenius, Hengstenberg, Maurer). Ewald derives it from הוֹשִׁיעַ, and Kimchi explains it as a compound of both words uniting the senses of both, as in the E. V., "I will bring them again to place them." But it is far better to interpret it like the similar form in Ezek. xxxvi. 11, than to adopt this Rabbinical refinement, which has no precedent elsewhere.

9 Ver. 7. — יִצְחָה. As Ephraim is a collective noun, there seems to be no reason for the periphrasis of the E. V. story of Ephraim.

10 Ver. 8. — Henderson's rendering, "Though I have scattered them, yet they shall," etc., is grammatically

impossible, is opposed to the true sense of  $\text{עָרֵי}$ , and is not required by the context. His "distant regions" is as improvement upon the  $\text{אֲרָצוֹת}$  "his countries."

11 Ver. 9. —  $\text{עַמִּי}$ . People. See on viii. 20.

12 Ver. 10. —  $\text{לֹא יִמָּצֵא$ . Cf. Josh. xiii. 16. (The necessary room) shall not be found for them.

13 Ver. 11. —  $\text{עָרֵי}$  is best taken as in apposition to the preceding noun. To make it a verb meaning to decay, after an Aramaic analogy (Maurer, Henderson, *et al.*), is far-fetched and needless. As a noun, it serves to show that the previous noun does not mean a literal son, but affliction represented under that figure.

14 Ver. 12. —  $\text{הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי}$ . The force of the Hithpaal conjugation here is to express more distinctly than the Kal, the idea of continuous habitual action. For the sentiment, cf. Micah iv. 5, where, however, Kal forms are used.

#### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This chapter does not commence a fresh train of thought, but is rather an expansion of the foregoing prophecy. First, there is a promise of rain and fruitful seasons (ver. 1) ; a reference to idolatry as cause of their afflictions (vers. 2, 3 a) ; deliverance by God's blessing upon native rulers (vers. 3 b, 4, 5) ; restoration of ancient mores (ver. 6) ; special mention of Ephraim as participating in the growth and enlargement promised to the whole people (vers. 7-9) ; farther promises to the nation couched in historic allusions to their former experience, and fulfilled only in the Messiah's kingdom (vers. 10-12). Some maintain that ver. 1 belongs to the preceding chapter, and ought not to have been separated from it (Hengstenberg), while others affirm the same of ver. 2 also (Hofmann, Köhler) ; but ver. 2 is plainly as closely connected with ver. 3 as it is with ver. 1. The question is of no importance to the interpretation.

Ver. 1. **Ask of Jehovah.** This summons to prayer is not a mere expression of God's readiness to give (Hengstenberg), but, both from the force of the words and the connection, is to be literally understood. Rain stands as a representative for all blessings, temporal and spiritual. In the time of the latter rain, is merely a rhetorical amplification, for it cannot be shown that the latter rain was more necessary than the early rain for maturing the harvest. Cf. Deut. xi. 13-15, from which the expressions here are taken. Lightnings are mentioned as precursors of rain. Cf. Jer. x. 13 ; Ps. exxxv. 7, where, however, a different word ( $\text{בָּרָקִים}$ ) is used. Give them, i. e., every one who asks.

Ver. 2. The call to prayer is sustained by a reference to the misery caused by their former dependence upon idols and soothsayers. *Totaphim*, a kind of household gods = Penates, who appear also to have been looked upon as oracles (Hos. iii. 4), in which latter light they are regarded here. The etymology of the word is still unsettled. The prevalence of impostors, of the kinds here mentioned, just before the overthrow of Judah, is abundantly established. Jer. xxvii. 9 ; xxix. 8 ; xxxiii. 9, 14, 32 ; Ezek. xxi. 34, xxii. 28. Therefore, the consequence was that they were compelled to wander away, and were without a ruler, i. e., one of their own Davidic line, — a state of things still in existence when Zechariah wrote.

Ver. 3. **Against the shepherds.** Israel having lost its native rulers, fell under the power of heathen governors, here styled shepherds and he-goats, (Is. xli. 9, *Heb.*). These are to be punished, because Jehovah regards those whom they oppress as his flock, whom He visits and protects. House of Judah is mentioned not in distinction from Ephraim (see vers. 6, 7), but as the central point and representative of the covenant people. A striking

comparison indicates that the deliverance is effected by an actual military struggle. Just as in ch. ix. 13, Jehovah called Judah and Ephraim his bow and arrow, so here He calls the former his goodly horse, such a horse as for his extraordinary qualities is chosen, and splendidly equipped as the war-horse of the general. The House of Judah, therefore will be well prepared to meet its enemies.

Ver. 4. **From him the corner-stone.**  $\text{אֶבֶן־זֶכֶּר}$  refers not to Jehovah (Hitzig, Köhler, Pressel), but to Judah, as appears from the connection and from the passage in Jer. (xxx. 21) on which this one leans. From themselves was to come forth every one of their rulers, which is expressed in the former part of the verse by figures, namely, the corner-stone, cf. Ps. cxviii. 22 ; the nail, the large ornamental pin, built into the wall of oriental houses for the purpose of suspending household utensils (Is. xxii. 23) ; the war-bow, which denotes military force and weapons in general (Is. 40).

Ver. 5. The consequence will be the annihilation of foes. And . . . like heroes. Some explain the allusion as = they trample the mire of the streets, i. e., their foes considered as such (like the sling-stones in ix. 15) ; so Hengstenberg, Keil, etc. But the verb in Kal is always elsewhere transitive, and the  $\text{וְהָיָה$  ought not to be overlooked. We should render, therefore, treading down (foes) in or into the mire (Fürst, Köhler). Riders on horses. Cavalry, the arm in which Israel was always weak, is mentioned in Dan. xi. 40 as the principal strength of the Asiatic rulers (comp. also 1 Mace. iii. 39, iv. 1). Hence the force of the promise here.

Ver. 6. **And I will strengthen, etc.** Judah and Joseph comprehend the entire people as a whole. Make them dwell, i. e., securely and happily as in the olden time, which is suggested also in the next clause but one (cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 11). **And I will hear them,** is a very comprehensive promise.

Ver. 7. **And Ephraim . . . wine.** In this verse and the following, the prophet refers particularly to Ephraim (but not to the exclusion of Judah), for the reason that heretofore the ten tribes had not participated as largely as it was intended they should, in the return from exile. They and their sons shall share in the coming conflict, and equally with Judah prove themselves to be like a hero. Their exaltation in Jehovah is expressed by a comparison which is applied by the Psalmist to the Lord Himself. Ps. lxxviii. 65.

Ver. 8. **I will hiss . . . increase.** The hissing or whistling is mentioned as a signal (cf. Is. v. 26, vii. 18). It alludes to the ancient method of swarming bees. This verse explains how Israel, so large a part of whom were still in exile, should take part in the victorious struggle. The Lord

would bring them back. The utter downfall of the northern kingdom, so long before that of Judah, had removed nearly every political reason for maintaining the old disruption, and all the circumstances of the time inclined the various tribes to coalesce again into one people. I have redeemed, *præf. proph.*, to express Jehovah's unalterable purpose. The last clause, like ver. 6 b, refers to Ezek. xxxiv. 11. The extraordinary multiplication of the Jews at and after this period is one of the most familiar facts of history. See Merivale, *History of the Romans*, ch. xlv. "Josephus informs us that two hundred years after the time here referred to, Galilee was peopled to an amazing extent, studded with cities, towns, and villages; and adds that the villages were not what are usually called by that name, but contained, some of them, fifteen thousand inhabitants." Henderson, *in loc.*

Ver. 9. And I will sow . . . return. The word *שָׁב* never means scatter in the sense of banishing or destroying (*First*, Henderson, *Hitag*), but always has the sense of sowing (*שָׁבַע*, LXX.; *seminabo*, Vulg.), and when applied to men, denotes increase (Hos. ii. 24; Jer. xxxi. 27). The passage means, then, that Israel while among the nations will repeat the experience of their ancestors in Egypt, "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Ex. i. 12). They shall live, as explained in Ezek. xxxvii. 14. The mention of the children with them implies that the blessing would not be transient, but abiding.

Ver. 10. And I will bring . . . Egypt. Some expositors suppose that by Egypt and Assyria are meant the lands so named, and vainly attempt to show that many of the ten tribes were carried or escaped to Egypt. It is far better to adopt the opinion of Gesenius, that "Egypt and Assyria are mentioned here in place of the different countries into which the Jews were scattered." Such a typical use of names is neither unnatural nor unusual. Egypt was the first oppressor of the covenant people, and Assyria was the final instrument of overthrowing the ten tribes, and the two terms might well be combined as a general statement of the lands of the dispersion. See this combination in a similar case in Is. xxvii. 13, and cf. Is. x. 24, xl. 11; 16, xix. 23, lii. 4; Hos. xi. 11. Köhler's objection that in this case Assyria must be taken in its most literal sense, is surely groundless, for the prophet could not have meant that the Ephraimites should be restored from certain regions and not from others. The general terms of the preceding verses forbid such a narrow view. Nor can Pressel claim the mention of Assyria as favoring the theory which dates the prophecy before the Captivity; because the subject of it is not Judah alone, but the whole nation, with special reference to Ephraim, and therefore Assyria was just the country which it suited the prophet to mention. The land of Gilead and Lebanon = northern Palestine on both sides of the Jordan, the former home of the ten tribes. Room . . . found, because of their increase. Merivale, in the place above cited, accounts for the manner in which the Jews in the centuries just before Christ, swarmed over the whole Roman world, "from the Tiber to the Kuphrates, from the pines of the Caucasus to the spice groves of Arabia Felix," by the insufficiency of their native land to support the immense population.

Ver. 11. And he passes. The subject, of course, is Jehovah, the discourse passing from direct to indirect address, in accordance with the He-

brew usage allowing such rapid transitions. To make *פָּסַח* the subject (Calvin, Cocceius, Syr.), is unnatural and stiff, besides connecting a feminine noun with a verb having a masculine suffix. This verse continues the figurative allusions of the preceding. Just as of old God gloriously vindicated his people in the passage over the Red Sea, so now He marches through the deep at the head of his chosen and suites down the roaring waves. The article in the sea points to the particular body of water through which Israel had once before been led, — the Arabian Gulf. *נָחַל* almost always = Nile. Here the term depths or floods is properly applied to its vast and regular inundations. In the last clause the characteristic feature of Assyria is well expressed by pride (Is. x. 7), and that of Egypt by the sceptre or rod of the taskmasters.

Ver. 12. And I strengthen. The whole section is appropriately wound up with this emphatic promise. The entire strength, conduct, hope, and destiny of Israel lay in Jehovah. "The name of Jehovah is a comprehensive expression denoting his glory as manifested in history" (Hengstenberg). Trusting and serving the God thus revealed, they would find the past a pledge of the future, and see the divine perfections as gloriously illustrated in their behalf as at any former period.

This chapter, as has been said, continues and enlarges the promises of the preceding. After tracing the distresses of the people to their apostasy, it sets forth their deliverance as effected through actual conflicts, in which the might of Jehovah gives to the native leaders a force and courage which suffice to subdue foes otherwise far superior. This victory is followed by a large increase of population, not confined to Judah but also including Israel. Nor is there reason to doubt that the independence, achieved by the Maccabees attracted very many of the exiles from the northern kingdom, who forgot the old causes of disension, and united heartily in maintaining the re-established national centre in Jerusalem. This fusion at home led to a similar fusion abroad; and wherever Jews were found who preserved their hereditary faith at all, they still remembered Jehovah as the one who had chosen Zion, and considered themselves as constituent parts of one covenant people. So far the predictions of the chapter were fulfilled historically in the period extending from the establishment of Jewish independence to the time of the advent. In the last three verses the Prophet describes a far greater, because spiritual blessing in terms borrowed from the old experiences of the people. The drying up of the sea, the humiliation of Assyria, the overthrow of Egypt simply set forth the removal of all possible obstacles in the way of a spiritual return to God. The Lord will reclaim and bless them by procedures as marvelous as any that ever occurred in their former history.

But before this great event takes place, before the Church of the Old Testament passes into the form and character of the Church of the New Testament, a sad and peculiar experience is to be gone through. This is set forth in a striking imagery of the next chapter.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. In the opening verse of this chapter the Prophet comes into direct opposition to many of the so-called Scientists of our day. They affirm



that "without a disturbance of natural law quite as serious as the stoppage of an eclipse or the rolling the St. Lawrence up the Falls of Niagara, no act of humiliation, individual or national, could call one shower from heaven" (Tyndall). It follows, of course, that only those who believe that the miraculous is still active in nature can consistently join in prayers for fair weather and for rain. The Prophet, on the contrary, directs the people whenever the heavens withhold their moisture, to ask from the Lord what they need, and assures them that asking they shall obtain; and yet neither he nor his hearers supposed that this process involved a miracle in any proper sense of that term. It certainly implies the attainment of an end which without this means would not be accomplished. It is the combining and directing of natural forces so as to secure a certain result. This is what men are doing all the time, without dreaming that they are miracle-workers. Much more may God do it, who is not, like us, limited by second causes. In this very matter of rain, a scientific man announced some years ago a certain process by which an adequate rain-fall could at any time be secured. Whether his theory was valid or not, no one scouted it as impossible, or preposterous. Yet learned men deny to God what they allow to themselves. Creatures may compel the clouds, but the Creator may not. They may employ one and another natural law so as to achieve novel effects, but the Maker of the whole,

"Who sets the bright procession on its way,  
And marshals all the order of the year,"

is shut up in the workmanship of his hands, and cannot possibly escape from the regular sequence of cause and effect. But this is simply the rejection, not merely of Christianity or of the Old Testament, but of all religion whatever. A God who has no control over nature is to all intents and purposes no God. Sentiments of reverence, gratitude, obligation, love, and dependence toward such a Being, are impossible. The doctrine of prayer, therefore, is a vital one. There never has been, there never can be a religion without communion with the object of worship. To deny the efficacy of prayer, even in such matters as the giving or withholding of rain, is to rebrand the human race into a state of practical atheism.

2. The question with man never is whether he will have a religion or not; but always whether he will have that which is true, or one that is false. Not only his intuitions, his moral convictions, but his dependent condition, his exposure to change, want, sorrow, and death, all compel him to look up to some superior invisible power, something nobler and better than himself. If this craving be not met by the truth, it surely will be by falsehood. A permanent state of atheistic unbelief is impossible. Such a state has never been seen in all the world's history. In ancient Israel there was a constant oscillation between the worship of Jehovah and the service of idols, but never the abnegation of all worship. And this is the alternative which confronts every man and every age. They may reject the true God and the revealed religion; but the inevitable result is superstition in some form, more or less refined. Just as among the Jews whenever they apostatized, "diviners" came to the front. When Saul could get no answer from the Lord, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by Prophets, he went to the Witch of Endor.

Intelligence and culture are no guard against such a result. If men will not believe the rational

and true, they will believe the absurd and the false. Our own land at this day furnishes conspicuous examples. Table-turnings and spirit-rappings have led captive many who turned away in scorn from the teachings of Christ and his Apostles. The voice of God, uttered with every kind and degree of evidences in his Word, has been given up for the sake of the pretended disclosures of the spirits of the dead; and the necromancy of the nineteenth century before Christ has been revived in the nineteenth century after Christ. And the results have been what was to be expected. On one hand a degree of unnatural excitement of the feelings and the imagination which terminated in an eclipse of reason, and on the other, a lowering of the tone of morals which undermined the family constitution, and swept away the surest safeguards of human society. It is as criminal and as dangerous to consult *diviners* now as it ever was in the days of ancient Israel. "Should not a people seek unto their God? [Should they seek] for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is. viii. 19, 20).

3. The prediction of the return of Ephraim in this chapter (ver. 6) has been sometimes cited as evidence that the ten tribes are still somewhere existing as a separate community, and as such are yet to be restored to their own land. But this is an error. The words of the Prophet were fulfilled in the period to which he refers. Many of the transplanted Ephraimites fell away from the faith and became absorbed in the heathen by whom they were surrounded, but many who remained true to Jehovah, joined their fortunes with those of their brethren of Judah. Their common calamities softened and at last obliterated the old feelings of enmity toward each other. Jerusalem became again the central point of the whole nation, and while not a few actually shared in the restoration, others who remained in exile, yet adhered to the second temple, aided it by their gifts, and often attended the yearly festivals. Hence all the latter were comprehended under the term, the *Diaspora* (Jas. i. 1). In the New Testament there are repeated allusions to the twelve tribes, conveying the distinct impression that the inhabitants of Palestine in our Lord's day represented both parts of the nation. There is no reason, therefore, for the pains which have been taken to discover them in some remote or obscure part of the globe. And indeed the hopeless disagreement of those who seek a historical identification of these exiles shows the vanity of the attempt. The foot of the Himalayas, the coast of Malabar, the interior of China, the Nestorians of Persia, and the Indians of North America, have all been claimed as containing the veritable descendants of the Hebrews whom Sargon carried away. This whole subject is treated with ability and learning in an article in the *Princeton Review* for April, 1873, by the Rev. John H. Shedd. The conclusions to which Mr. Shedd comes are thus stated:—

1. That the apostate Israelites were lost among the idolaters of the Assyrian Empire at the time of their apostasy.

2. That the true Israelites under Persian rule became identified with the captivity of Judah, and the nationality of the Ten Tribes was extinct.

3. That these Jews, embracing, since the time of Cyrus, the faithful of both Judah and Israel greatly increased in numbers, were reinforced by emigrants from Palestine, and have sent off col-

only to all the East, throughout Persia, Tartary, and Thibet; but there is no Scriptural or historical basis for the idea that the "Ten Tribes" are living as a body in some obscure region or are found in any one nation.

4. That some at least of the communities of Jews still living in the land of their original exile, are lineal descendants of the Ten Tribes; and considering the history of those Jews, their present numbers of fifty or sixty thousand souls in Persia and Assyria, and several thousand more in Babylonia, they sufficiently solve the problem.

#### HOMEILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

MELVILL: *As ye run.* Men seem practically to have but little remembrance that the mainspring of all the mechanism of second causes is in the hands of an invisible Creator; that it is not from what goes on in the hidden laboratories of what they call nature that season succeeds season, and shower and sunshine alternate with so much of beautiful and beneficent order, but that the whole arrangement is momentarily dependent upon the will and energy of that supreme Being who "sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers."

CALVIN: *Grass in the field.* The Prophet no doubt includes here under one kind all things necessary for a happy life; for it is not the will of God to fill his faithful people in this world as though they were swine, but his design is to give them by means of earthly things, a taste of the spiritual life. *I am Jehovah their God.* He means by this that although he had for a time rejected

the Jews, their adoption would not be void; for by calling himself their God He reminds them of his covenant, as if He said that He had not in vain made a covenant with Abraham, and promised that his seed should be blessed. *And I will sow them.* This was an instance of the wonderful grace of God; for hence it happened that the knowledge of celestial truth shone everywhere; and at length when the Gospel was proclaimed, a free access was had to the Gentiles, because Jews were dispersed through all lands. The first receptacles (hospitals) of the Gospel were the Synagogues. God thus scattered his seed here and there that it might in due time produce fruit beyond the expectation of all.

POPE: *Diviners have seen a lie.* Unbelief has recourse to a crowd of superstitious devices, and by their folly and impotence is put to shame: Faith on the contrary turns to prayer and through it works wonders. *Passes through the sea.* For how many has Israel's wonderful passage through the Red Sea been a pattern of a wonderful escape through straits and sorrows of every kind! The text is one of the oldest examples of this use of the deliverance, but new ones are constantly occurring.

JAY: *I will strengthen them in the Lord.* The very assurance our hearts want. Its fulfillment will keep us in our work, not cause us to cease. It will be reasonable and proportioned to our needs. "As thy days," etc. It will come in God's own way, that is, in the use of the means He has appointed. These we are to employ, especially when we are not in a proper or lively frame; as fire is most needful when we are cold.

### B. ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

#### CHAPTER XI.

A. *Postical Introduction* (vers. 1-3). B. *The Flock of Slaughter* (vers. 4-6). C. *The Prophet tries to be their Shepherd* (vers. 7, 8). D. *He Fails* (vers. 9-11). E. *He is contemptuously Rejected* (vers. 12, 13). F. *The Result* (ver. 14). G. *A worthless Shepherd takes Charge* (vers. 15, 16). H. *The Shepherd Punished* (ver. 17).

- 1 Open, O Lebanon, thy doors,  
And let fire devour thy cedars.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 Howl, cypress, for the cedar has fallen,  
For the lofty are laid waste;  
Howl, ye oaks of Bushan,  
For the high<sup>2</sup> forest has gone down.
- 3 A sound of the howling of the shepherds!  
For their glory is laid waste;  
A sound of the roaring of young lions!  
For the pride of Jordan is laid waste.
- 4 Thus saith Jehovah, my God,  
Feed<sup>3</sup> the flock of slaughter;<sup>4</sup>
- 5 Whose buyers slaughter them and are not guilty,  
And their sellers say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am getting rich,<sup>5</sup>  
And their own shepherds spare them not.
- 6 For I will no more spare the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah,  
And behold I give up the men,  
Each into the hand of his neighbor and into the hand of his king,

And they lay waste<sup>6</sup> the land,

And I will not deliver out of their hand.

- 7 And I fed<sup>7</sup> the flock of slaughter, therefore<sup>8</sup> the most miserable sheep,<sup>9</sup> and I took to myself two staves; the one<sup>10</sup> I called Beauty, the other I called Bands, and I fed the flock. And I cut off the three<sup>11</sup> shopherds in one month, and my

9 soul became impatient with them, and their soul also abhorred me. And I said,

I will not feed you,

The dying, let it die,

And thou cut off, let it be cut off,

And the remaining, let them devour each the flesh of the other.

- 10 And I took my staff Beauty and broke it asunder in order to destroy my cove-

11 nant with all peoples.<sup>12</sup> And it was destroyed in that day, and thus<sup>13</sup> the wretched

12 of the flock, who gave heed to me, knew that this was the word of Jehovah. And I said to them, If it seem good to you, give me my wages;<sup>14</sup> and if not, forbear.

13 And they weighed as my wages thirty<sup>15</sup> pieces of silver. And Jehovah said to me, Throw it to the potter, the noble price at which I am valued by them; and I took the thirty pieces of silver, and threw it into the house of Jehovah, to the potter.

14 And I broke my second staff, Bands, to destroy the brotherhood<sup>16</sup> between Judah and Israel.

15 And Jehovah said to me, Take again the implements<sup>17</sup> of a foolish shepherd,

16 For, behold, I raise up a shopherd in the land,

The perishing<sup>18</sup> he will not visit,

The straying<sup>19</sup> will he not seek for,

And the wounded he will not heal,

The strong<sup>20</sup> will he not feed;

But the flesh of the fat ones he will eat,

And their hoofs he will break off.

Wo to the worthless<sup>21</sup> shepherd who forsakes<sup>22</sup> the flock!

A sword upon his arm!

And upon his right eye!

His arm shall be utterly withered,

And his right eye utterly blinded.

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL

1 Ver. 1. — Perhaps it would be more exact to render, "devour among thy cedars." Cf. 2 Sam. xviii. 8 for the use of נבל with the preposition ב.

2 Ver. 2. — For קציר many MSS. and (two early editions read קציר, which is also found in the Keri; but it is generally considered to be a needless attempt at correction. The Kethib is lit., cut off, h. inaccessible, which Dr. Riggs gives in his emendations.

3 Ver. 4. — רעה. Feed is a miserably inadequate version of this word. It means to perform the whole work of a shepherd, of which feeding is but one part. Quelling, defending, and ruling are also included. The same is true of the Greek equivalent ποιμαίνω, but not of the Latin pascere.

4 Ver. 4. — "Flock of Slaughter" Kell renders of strangling, and says that the cognate verb "does not mean to slay but to strangle." If it has this meaning in the cognate Arabic form, which I doubt, it is certainly lost in the Hebrew. See any of the Lexicons or Concordances. צאן חֲרֻקָה = צאן טָבָחָה (Ps. xlv. 23). The flock destined or accustomed to be slaughtered.

5 Ver. 5. — וְאָמַר is merely a syncopated form of וְאָמַרְתִּי. The vav expresses consequence, and is translated accordingly. The tenses are futures expressing continued action. The plural verbs are employed in a distributive sense; they, i. e., each of them, will say, etc.

6 Ver. 6. — כָּרַתְתִּי, lit., smite in pieces = lay waste.

7 Ver. 7. — The E. V. "and I will feed," although it follows the LXX. and Vulgate, is opposed alike to grammar and to sense. The full force of the vav conj. is, "And so I fed." Exactly the same form is found in the last clause of the verse.

8 Ver. 7. — לָכֵן has been very variously rendered. The LXX. read it and the following word, as one, and so made Consequence of it, which Blayney adopts. The Vulgate, propter hoc = therefore, is the usual sense of the word but confusedly hard here. Some (Kluehl, Revid, Henderson) make it a noun with a preposition = in respect to truth, i. e., truly, but there is no other instance of the kind. Others (Hitzig) render on account of you, which also lacks authority. In this conflict of opinion, it is better to adhere to usage and render therefore; but then this cannot give the reason for the shepherd's assumption of his office as Hengstenberg claims, for it is too far from the verb; but must assign the consequence of the flock's description, thus, And so I fed the flock of slaughter, therefore (i. e., because so named), a most miserable flock.

- 9 Ver. 7. — עֲנִי הַצֹּאן is an emphatic positive = superlative, *the most miserable sheep*.
- 10 Ver. 7. — חָדָד. Köhler insists that this must be regarded as a true construct, depending upon כֹּהֵם understood, but it is better to take it as construct used for the absolute, as elsewhere (Green, *II. G.*, § 223 a.).
- 11 Ver. 8. — "The three shepherds." Proelz shows that Köhler has quite failed to overthrow Hilali's assertion, that אֶת־שְׁלֹשָׁת הַרְקִים must be thus translated (cf. vers. 12, 13; Gen. xl. 10, 12, 18).
- 12 Ver. 10. — עֲפִים. Peoples. Cf. Text and Gram. on viii. 20.
- 13 Ver. 11. — כֵּן. Not truly, nor therefore, but thus.
- 14 Ver. 12. — שָׂכָרִי. Not price (E. V.), but reward or wages. The word in the next verse, similarly but correctly rendered price in the E. V., is a totally different one, הִיקָר.
- 15 Ver. 12. — שָׁהָל as usual is omitted before כָּהֵם.
- 16 Ver. 14. — אֲחִינֹחַ — *Ev. Ar.* Found in cognate languages and the Mishna. A token of post-exilic composition.
- 17 Ver. 15. — קָלִי is a collective singular.
- 18 Ver. 16. — הִקָּר. The connection requires us to render the participle in the present, instead of the past, as E. V. "cut off."
- 19 Ver. 16. — נָעַר is with LXX., Vulg., and Syr. to be taken as formed from נָעַר, to shake, *Pist.* to disperse, Arab. نَعَار — is *sugam cerebre* (Gesenius; Fürst, *et al.*). Hengstenberg makes it the ordinary Hebrew word of the same radical, but this is never applied to animals, and if it were, could not have the meaning which he claims, namely, *tender*.
- 20 Ver. 16. — נִצְיָקָה, what stands upon its feet, i. e., is strong and healthy. Henderson derives it from an Arabic root نَصَب — to be wearied, feeble, which he thinks required by the connection. But the picture is the more vivid when it shows all classes and conditions of the flock to be equally neglected. Dr. Riggs renders "the well (or sound)."
- 21 Ver. 17. — יָלִיל, not idol, but toothless, or, as Köhler says, *mock-shepherd*. Dr. Riggs gives "Shepherd of vanity," which itself needs interpretation.
- 22 Ver. 17. — עֹבֵרִי, paragogic vowel (Green, *II. G.*, § 61. 6 a.), found chiefly in poetical passages.

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This chapter, on any view of its meaning, presents a marked contrast to the tenor of chap. ix. and x. The latter are full of encouragement. They speak much of conflict, but uniformly represent the covenant people as victorious, and paint a bright picture of increase, prosperity, and happiness. Here, on the contrary, is a sad scene of general overthrow caused by deliberate and persistent wickedness. The explanation is well given by Calvin: "These predictions appear to contradict one another. But it was necessary that the blessings of God should first of all be announced to the Jews in order that they might engage with greater alacrity in the work of building the temple, and feel assured that they were not wasting their time. It was now desirable to address them in a different style, lest, as was too generally the case, hypocrites should be hardened by their vain confidence in these promises. It was also requisite, in order that the faithful should take alarm in time, and earnestly draw near to God; since nothing is more destructive than false security; and whenever sin is committed without restraint, the judgment of God is close at hand." Just then, as in the former part of the book, there is interjection. In the midst of a series of encouraging symbolical visions, a pair of representations (ch. vi.) setting forth the certainty and severity of the punishment of wickedness, so here, after exhibiting Judah's protection from Alexander, and also (with a passing glance at Zion's future king, Messiah) the triumph of the Maccabees and the recovery of former strength and influence, the Prophet passes on to lift the veil from the final outcome of Jewish obduracy, and its terrible results.

The first three verses describe the ruin of the entire land, in words arranged with great rhetorical power, full of poetic imagery and lively dramatic movement. Then the cause of this widespread desolation is set forth, not by vision as in the earlier portion, but by symbolical action or process subjectively wrought. Israel is a flock doomed to perish by the divine judgment. The Prophet personating his Lord makes an effort to avert the threatened infliction. He therefore assumes the office of shepherd, equipped with staves fitted to secure success. He seeks to rid them of false leaders, and win them to ways of truth and right. But the attempt is vain, because of their obdurate wickedness, and the issue is a mutual recoil. He loathes them; they abhor him. Accordingly he significantly breaks his staves in token that all is over. But after breaking one, and before doing the same to the other, the shepherd asks a reward for his unavailing effort. He receives one, but it is so trifling that he had better have received none. They insult him with the offer of the price of a slave (vers. 4-14). Then the scene changes. Instead of a wise, kind shepherd, the Prophet personates one of an opposite character. The gentle crooks, Beauty and Bands, are replaced by knives and battle-axes. The flock, so far from being fed and guided and guarded, is torn and devoured, and then at last its misguided rulers are smitten and palsied, and so the curtain falls (vers. 15-17).

Vers. 1-3 are a vivid poetical apostrophe, introductory to what follows in the rest of the chapter. A fierce conflagration sweeps over the land, devouring alike mountain forests, and lowland pastures; and a cry of despair is heard from man and beast.

Ver. 1. Open, O Lebanon, etc. Instead of simply declaring that Lebanon shall be devastated,



the Prophet summons the lofty mountains to open its doors for the consuming fire.

Ver. 2. Howl, cypress, for the cedar, etc. Continuing his apostrophe, he calls on the less important trees to bewail the fall of the stately cedars as foreshadowing their own impending doom, for if the steep, inaccessible forest on the mountain side is prostrated, much more must the cypresses and oaks be consumed. But the crashing ruin extends yet further.

Ver. 3. A sound of the howling of the shepherds! The flames spread over the low grounds and pastures of the wilderness, and the Prophet hears the outcry of the shepherds over the destruction of what is their hope and dependence. With this is mingled the roaring of young lions, driven by the fiery blast from their favorite lair, the thickets on the river banks, known as the pride of the Jordan (Jer. xii. 5; alix. 19; l. 43), so called because the luxuriant bushes and reeds inclose the stream with a garland of fresh and beautiful verdure.

To what does this vivid and startling representation refer? (1.) A very old Jewish interpretation makes it descriptive of the overthrow of the temple, which is here called Lebanon, because so much of the wood of that goodly mountain was used in its construction. So Eusebius, Jerome, Grotius, and Henderson. But this, as Calvin says, is a figment. Indeed, it gives no explanation of Basan, or of ver. 3. (2.) Others applied it to Jerusalem, which is liable to the same objection. (3.) Most of the moderns refer it to the holy land, some supposing that the cedars, cypresses, etc., denote heathen rulers who are swept away by a general judgment (Lofman, Umbreit, Kliefoth); others holding that these terms denote the chief men of Israel (Mitzi, Maurer, Hengstenberg, Ewald). But any such close pressing of a passage like this, the most vigorous and poetical in all the book, is both needless and unwise. Standing as a prelude to the fearful doom of the flock of slaughter, it is simply a highly figurative representation of the overthrow of all that is lofty and glorious and powerful in the nation and kingdom of the Jews. The choice of the local terms used (Lebanon, Basan, etc.) may have been suggested by ch. x. 10; but even if not so, they may very well stand for the whole kingdom. A poet is not to be bound by the rules of a historiographer. Pressel, quite consistently with his general view of the second part of Zechariah, sees in this prelude only a literal description of the march of Tiglath Pileser, when he invaded Israel in the days of Pekah (2 Kings xv. 29). But surely the Assyrian king did not set fire to the cedars of Lebanon or the reeds of the Jordan.

Vers. 4-14. A justly celebrated section, of which Pressel says it "exhibits Isaiah's power and beauty of language, as well as his fullness of Messianic thought." By command of Jehovah the prophet assumes the office of a shepherd over his flock, and feels it until he is compelled by its ingratitude to break his staves of office and give up the sheep to destruction.

Ver. 4. Thus saith Jehovah. To whom does he speak? The earlier interpreters said, to the Angel of the Lord or Messiah. But this is disproved by the commission in ver. 13 given to the same person: Take upon the implements of a foolish shepherd, *seq.* — language which, as all admit, could not be addressed to the Messiah. Others say that the prophet in his individual capacity is addressed (Ritzsch, Ewald, *et al.*), but the whole strain

of the passage, the illustrative parallels in other prophets, the destroying of other shepherds (ver. 8), and the thirty pieces of silver, all show that Zechariah in person could not have been intended. It remains then to view him as addressed in his typical or representative capacity, not, however, as standing either for the prophetic order (Hoffman), or the mediatorial office (Köhler), for no human agency could possibly perform the works here recounted; but as personating the great Being who was prefigured by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel under the form of the Good Shepherd. Flock of slaughter. Not the whole human race (Hoffman), but, as nearly all agree, the nation of Israel. Their condition is farther described in the next verse.

Ver. 5. Whose buyers, etc. Not "possessors," as E. V. but "buyers," both because this is the primary signification of the word, and because the antithesis of "sellers" in the next clause requires it. These buyers and sellers are those who do just as they please with the covenant people, consulting only their own interests. The one class slaughters them and are not guilty, *i. e.*, do not incur blame, so far, at least, as the mere act is concerned, since they only execute what is a righteous punishment from God. This statement is just the reverse of the one in Jer. ii. 3, "Israel is holy to Jehovah . . . all who devour him become guilty, evil will come upon them," where it appears that while Israel was holy, none could injure him without incurring guilt. Now, however, the case is different. Cf. Jer. ii. 6 (in Hebrew), where the same

word, *מְבָרֵךְ*, is used. The other class say, Blessed be Jehovah, etc., *i. e.*, they make merchandise of the people, and yet consider the gains thus made perfectly honest, such as they can properly thank God for bestowing. Those buyers and sellers are heathen rulers and oppressors. The last clause completes the picture by setting forth their own shepherds, *i. e.*, their domestic rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, as those who do not spare them, — a pregnant negative.

Ver. 6. For I will no more . . . saith Jehovah. This verse assigns the reason for the direction given in ver. 4. Jehovah, being about to visit upon his people the just desert of their sins, will yet make one more effort to save them. If this fails, they will be given up in the worst evils, namely, inward discord and subjugation to a stranger. Thus apprehended, the land is the land of Israel, and its inhabitants — the flock of slaughter (Calvin, Hengstenberg). Others (Keil, Köhler) take the phrase as = the nations of the world, and suppose the sense to be that Jehovah will no longer suffer them to oppress his people with impunity. This is grammatically possible, but needlessly diverts the current of thought in the passage, which is the sins and sufferings of the chosen people. His king, *i. e.*, foreign oppressor. Cf. Hos. xi. 5. The last clause fitly completes the sad picture.

Ver. 7. And I fed, etc. The prophet assumes the duty enjoined upon him. He undertakes to discharge the functions of a shepherd to a flock which is in a very sad condition, — so much so as to be already devoted to destruction. That is, dropping the figure, he proposes to guide and feed and defend a people so wicked and hardened that they are on the point of being given over to the just retribution of their sinful ways. He begins by assuming the implements of office. I took . . . two staves, such as shepherds use. One of these he named *מִשְׁכָּב*, which most expositors

(Kwald, Umbreit, Kell, Henderson) render, Grace or Favor, but it is better to adhere to the primary signification of the word, Beauty or Loveliness (Hitzig, Hengstenberg, Maurer, Köhler), as in Ps. xlvii. 4, xc. 17, *beauty of Jehovah* = all that makes Him an object of affection or desire. Of course, the staff denotes the loveliness, not of the people (Black), but of God. The other staff he named **לִפְתָּח**. This word the LXX. (*αγορῆμα*) and the Vulgate (*siniculi*) seem to have read as if pointed, **לִפְתָּח**, for which there is no authority. As it stands, the word is masculine plural of Kal participle. Luther, and many others after him, render "destroyers," but the verb never has this meaning in the Kal. Another class render it "the bound" or "the allied" (Hitzig, Hengstenberg, Maurer, Kliefoth), but this would require a passive participle. It only remains to adopt the legitimate, natural sense — "binders, or binding ones" (Macekuz, Gesenius, Fürst, Keil). The plural may be explained as a plural of excellence, and the general sense is well enough expressed by the E. V., *bands*. (Gesenius says, *Contrariusque potius profane*). And I fed the flock, i. e., with these two staves, one inditing God's favor and protection from outward foes; the other, an internal union and fellowship. The next verse shows what he did in the discharge of this office.

**Ver. 8. And I cut off.** . . . one day. Who are the three shepherds? Forty different answers have been given, which may thus be classified: (1.) Those who referred them to individuals, from Jerome's Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, to Calnet's Roman emperors, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. The impossibility of any agreement upon the point shows that three distinct persons cannot be intended. (2.) The "later criticism" maintains that the three shepherds are the three kings of Israel, Zechariah, Shallum, and Menahem; but these were not cut off in one month, and even if that designation of time were referred (as it cannot be) to the duration of their reigns, it would apply only to one of them, Shallum; 2 Kings xv. 10-13. Nor was their cutting off an act of mercy even to Israel, which the cutting off in the text is evidently meant to be. (3.) Others suppose that the phrase points to the three imperial rulers who became liege-lords of the covenant nation, i. e., the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Macedonian dynasties (Kbrant, Kliefoth, Köhler, Keil). But it is not consistent with usage to call these shepherds; in no conceivable sense were they cut off in one month when cut off they were succeeded by another, a fourth, quite as much an oppressor of God's people as they were; and besides, Babylon was already destroyed at the time Zechariah wrote. (4.) It is better to fall back on the old opinion (Theodoret, Cyril), that the three shepherds are the three orders by which Israel was ruled, — the civil authorities, the priests, and the prophets. These three classes are mentioned together in Jer. li. 8, 18 as perverters of the nation and causes of its destruction. And although in the future to which the passage refers, there were no longer prophets, yet there was a class, the Scribes or teachers of the law, who stood in the same relation to the people, and partly, at least, discharged the same functions. See the three classes mentioned by our Lord in Matt. xxi. 21. In one month = in a period which is long when compared with one day, but brief as contrasted with other periods of time. It shows that the extermination of the three shepherds is not to

be regarded as a single act like the expiation (iii. ix.), but as a continuous act which occupies some time" (Hengstenberg). The plural suffix, **ם**, in the next clause, **My soul became impatient . . . abhorred me**, by the earlier interpreters and by Hengstenberg, Kliefoth, et al., is referred to the shepherds, but it is certainly more natural to refer it to "the flock" in ver. 7, and consider the clause as furnishing the reason of the rejection stated in the next verse, which is evidently aimed at the Jewish nation as a whole. The Good Shepherd lost patience with their perverse impenitence, and they, on the other hand, loathed him for his spirituality and holiness.

**Ver. 9. And I said.** . . . **flesh of the other.** The shepherd renounces his flock. I will not feed you, i. e., I will no longer be your shepherd. The futures in the second half of the verse are by some taken strictly as predictions, but it is more vivid and more natural, like the older versions, to render them optatively in the sense of surrender. All kindly control is withdrawn, and the flock is left to receive the appropriate consequences of its fatal rejection of the means of deliverance. The three forms of calamity mentioned are death by natural causes, plague or famine; violence at the hand of foreign foe; and intestine discord. On the last clause, compare Is. ix. 20, 21. The fulfillment of these words in the history of Jerusalem is well known.

**Ver. 10. And I took my staff.** . . . **nations.** What is predicted in the foregoing verse is here exhibited in a symbolical action — the breaking of the staff, Beauty, — the explanation of which is immediately added. The Lord will remove the restraint which He had hitherto laid upon the enmity of foreign nations. See this restraint from violence expressed in the form of a covenant in Job v. 23; Hns. ii. 18; Ezek. xxxiv. 25. **ם** has here its usual sense of peoples or nations, and not that of the tribes of Israel; as Calvin and some of the moderns affirm (cf. xii. 6; Micah i. 5).

**Ver. 11. And it was destroyed.** . . . **word of Jehovah.** The covenant was annulled, just as the staff had been broken; the thing signified answered to the sign. This was not observed by the flock at large, but the wretched portion of it, the small company who gave heed to the Lord (cf. John x. 4, 5, 14, 15), recognized the fulfillment of a divine word (cf. Jer. xxxii. 8). "In that day," i. e., that in which the staff was broken.

**Ver. 12. And I said to them.** . . . **pieces of silver.** To them would at first sight refer to the wretched among the sheep just mentioned, but the connection, and the form of the inquiry, which aims simply to ascertain whether they are willing to acknowledge and appreciate his pastoral care, show that it must be addressed to the whole flock. His leaving the matter to their pleasure — "if it seem good," — indicates that he served them not for wages, but in obedience to the Divine will (Köhler). The wages, however, were due. They are usually explained to mean repentance and faith or heartfelt piety. What they offered was thirty pieces of silver, the compensation for a slave who had been killed (Ex. xxi. 32), the price for which a female slave could be purchased (Hos. iii. 2). Such an offer was "more offensive than a direct refusal" (Hengstenberg). Accordingly it was contemptuously rejected, as the next verse shows.

**Ver. 13. And Jehovah said.** . . . **to the potter.** As the prophet acted in the name of the

Lord, the Lord regards the wages of the shepherd as offered to himself, and therefore tells his representative what to do with the miserable sum. "The noble price at which I am valued" is, of course, an ironical expression, — one of the few instances in Scripture in which that form of speech occurs. This renders it exceedingly improbable that the Lord would direct such a sum to be put into the treasury, as many interpret his words, "Throw to the potter," to mean, either taking  $\text{זָרָה}$  to be a

royalist's error for  $\text{זָרָה}$  = treasury or treasurer (Syr., Kimchi, et al.); or altering the last vowel of the former, and making it synonymous with the latter (Jahn, Hitzig); or deriving the word from the intransitive  $\text{זָרָה}$  to be *warped*, and rendering it "clef in the treasure chest," which Pressel claims as a well-grounded and simple explanation! There is no authority for altering the text, and  $\text{זָרָה}$  always means an image-maker or potter. It

seems clear that the phrase is a sort of proverb, and is used contemptuously, like our common saying, "Throw it to the dogs. So much is evident, even if we reject the account which Hengstenberg gives of its origin. He argues from Jer. xviii. 2, xix. 2, that there was a potter employed about the Temple, that his workshop was in the Valley of Hinnom, which from the time of Josiah had been fearfully polluted in every possible way, and that hence his pottery became an unclean spot. He insists that our passage contains an allusion to the act of Jeremiahs (ch. xix.) when, with several of the elders and priests, he went to the Valley of Hinnom, and there broke a potter's earthen vessel, and said, "Even so will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again, and they shall bury them in Tophet because there is no more room. . . . and I will make this city like Tophet." Hengstenberg claims that the casting of the thirty pieces to the potter was simply a renewal of the old symbol and a fresh pledge of God's purpose to punish. It is objected to this view with much force that the potter did not certainly dwell in Hinnom, and that if he did, this fact would not make him personally unclean. Köhler explains the phrase as meaning, "The sum is just large enough to pay a potter for the pitchers and pots which he furnishes, and which are thought of so little value that men are easily comforted for the breaking of any by the thought that others can readily be obtained in their stead." This, however, does not account for the word "Throw," which is emphatic. It is best to rest in the general conception of a contemptuous rejection of the offered wages. In the execution of the command the prophet threw the money in the house of Jehovah, which Hengstenberg explains as meaning that it was to be carried thence to the potter, in reply to which it is justly said that if that were the prophet's meaning, he expresses himself very obscurely. The circumstance is, no doubt, significant, and may express either that the rejection of the wages was done in Jehovah's name and by his authority, or that being done in the sanctuary where the people assembled for worship, it indicated that they would be held accountable for their course. This shameful payment by the people leads to another token of Jehovah's displeasure.

Ver. 14. And I broke . . . and Israel. The evil threatened here is worse than the former. It is the loss of all fraternal unity, represented under the figure of the old disruption of the nation in the time of Jeroboam. This verse is a sad illustration

in the way of those who refer the composition of the Second Part of Zechariah to a period prior to the Captivity, for to account for this verse they must put the period back to the days of Solomon, which is quite incredible. The breaking up of the nation into parties bitterly hostile to each other, was one of the most marked peculiarities of the later Jewish history, and greatly accelerated the ruin of the popular cause in the Roman war.

Vers. 15-17. Since Israel rejected the good shepherd, they should be tended by shepherds of a very different class. This truth is represented by a fresh symbolical action.

Ver. 15. And Jehovah said . . . shepherd. Again points back to ver. 7, and shows that the present action is of the same symbolic character as the one there recorded. "A crook, a bag, a pipe, a knife, etc., were the articles usually carried by shepherds. The nature of these other implements is not specified, but they were doubtless of a character fitted rather to injure than to benefit the flock. Foolish, with the usual Scriptural implication of wickedness. "The term directs attention to the fact that the rulers of the nation are so blinded by the judicial punishment inflicted by God, as to be unable to see that whilst their fury is directed against the nation they are undermining their own welfare" (Hengstenberg). Who is meant by this evil shepherd? The "later critics" say, Pekah, or Hosea, or Menahem. Others say, Herod (Henderson), the Romans (Hoffmann, Köhler, Kell), or the whole body of native rulers (Hengstenberg). I prefer to combine the last two and understand the shepherd to represent the ruling power in whomsoever vested. The point of the prediction is, that just they who ought to protect and aid the people would oppress and destroy them. They are presented in the form of an ideal unity in order to complete the antithesis to the one good shepherd. The next verse describes the conduct of this evil ruler.

Ver. 16. For behold I raise . . . break off. He does the very opposite of what Christ is represented as doing in Is. xlii. 3. He not merely neglects, but destroys (cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 3, 4). **The perishing.** The present rendering in the text is equally grammatical with the past adopted in E. V., and more consistent with the verb *visit*. The whole verse is striking in its complete enumeration of particulars, showing how far this evil ruler falls short of what is involved in the oriental conception of a shepherd. The history of Israel after the flesh furnishes for centuries one continuous commentary upon the fidelity of this delineation. The breaking off of hoofs expresses the ferocious greed of the shepherds who will rend even these extremities rather than lose a shred of the flesh. This is better than the view (Ewald, Hitzig) which makes it refer to injuries caused by driving the flock over rough and stony roads. But these merciless masters are to meet due retribution.

Ver. 17. Woe to the worthless . . . blinded. The arm is the organ of strength, the right eye of vigilance. As these are the members which instead of guarding the flock as they should have done, shamefully abused it, they are specified as the objects of punishment. The apparent jumble of metaphorical expressions in threatening a sword upon the arm and the eye, and then declaring that the former shall be withered and the other blinded, has led some (Jahn, Bauren, Pressel) to give to  $\text{זָרָה}$  the pointing  $\text{זָרָה}$  = dryness (as Vulgate, Arab. and Sam. have done in Deut. xxviii. 22)

But it is better to allow that the Prophet connects several punishments together in order to render prominent the greatness of the retribution. The sacred writers are not concerned about the requirements of an artificial rhetoric where the sense is abundantly plain (cf. Is. lxxi. 5). A similar reason may have led Rosenmüller to follow the Chaldee in changing the verse from the liveliest poetry into the feeblest prose by rendering, "Woe to the shepherd who is like a butcher, whose knife is in his hand and whose eye is upon the sheep to slay them."

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The rejection of Israel after the flesh is the one sad subject of this chapter. The picture is wholly dark, unrelieved by a single ray of light. The impression made by the opening verses, the vivid startling prelude, is deepened all the way through to the end. A whirlwind of flame sweeps through the entire land, laying waste mountain and plain, forests and meadows, and drying up even streams and rivers. Men and beasts are overtaken together, and their cries of terror and despair indicate the completeness of the fiery ruin. It seems as if the Prophet, rising with the awful grandeur of his theme, had condensed into a few poetic lines the substance of the long chapters in which Moses of old had predicted the divine judgment upon an unfaithful people. The national Israel had enjoyed peculiar privileges, but such privileges always draw with them increased responsibility. As Jehovah said by the mouth of Amos (iii. 2), "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." Repeatedly in the course of their previous history had God visited them with his rod, but there had always been a recovery. War, pestilence, or famine had executed his wrath; or they were sold into the hand of their enemies for a longer or shorter period; and once they had actually been transplanted into a foreign land where they remained for more than two generations. But in the end the rod was lifted off, and they resumed their former condition. Now, however, there was to be a final act of judgment, one animating up in itself all that had gone before, and expressing once for all the wrath of God upon obdurate impenitence. The unfaithful trustees should be dispossessed of their trust, their precious inheritance given to others, and themselves cast out to become a hissing and a by-word. Foreign foes and evil discords would concur to work their destruction, and they who should be their protectors would become their oppressors. So without friends or helpers in heaven or on earth, they would pass away as an organized nation, and live only to perpetuate the memory of their past history, and teach more vividly its great lessons of sin and retribution.

2. But prior to the consummation of this great act of judgment, before the fire was yet kindled, the Lord determined to make one last effort to save the wretched people. This is set forth in the striking symbolism of the chapter, by a shepherd who offers to take charge of the flock notwithstanding its miserable condition. Instead of bearing a single crook, he is furnished with two staves. These have names, expressing in one case the divine favor which wards off all external foes; in the other, union or concord, which when it exists excludes the evils sure to be engendered by mutual distrust and alienation. But the diligence and

affection of the shepherd produced no effect. The fore-doomed flock turned away from him with loathing. The kindly effort miserably failed. The passage bears a striking analogy to the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matt. xxi. 33, 34; Mark xii. 1-12). The lord of the vineyard had repeatedly sent messengers to receive of his fruits, but these were abused and injured as often as they were sent. "At last he sent his Son, saying, 'They will reverence my Son.' But even this means failed. The Son was no more regarded than the servants had been. On the contrary, he was cast out of the vineyard and slain. The contemporary Jews, when asked by our Lord what would be the fate of these wicked husbandmen, answered promptly that they would be miserably destroyed, and the vineyard let out to others who would render the fruits in their season. They thus pronounced their own sentence. For the Saviour, after reminding them of the stone which the builders rejected and which yet became the head of the corner, declared with great solemnity, 'Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' Nothing more was to be done. The last and crowning manifestation of the divine mercy had been made, and yet, so far from awakening and reclaiming the infatuated people, it only incensed them, and brought wrath and ill-doing upon the bearer of the message. Just so with the flock Zechariah describes. They had the services of Him who justly calls himself the Good Shepherd, under whom all may find protection and repose, green pastures, and running streams. But they would none of Him. He came unto his own, and his own received Him not. There was a deliberate and peremptory rejection of God's unspeakable gift. When the furious crowd, gathered before the tribunal of Pilate, rent the air with shouts, 'Away with Him, crucify Him,' the Roman governor asked in wonder, 'Shall I crucify your king? Instantly came the startling answer from the heads of the nation, 'We have no king but Cæsar' (John xix. 15). These decisive words terminated the case. Pilate ceased to remonstrate, and gave sentence that it should be as they required. Then was filled the measure of Israel's iniquity. 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now have they no cloak for their sin.' . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father' (John xv. 22-24). Israel rejected the good shepherd, and was itself in turn rejected. The two staves were broken, and he who held them relinquished his office. Neither Beauty nor Hands any longer performed their grateful function. To break a shepherd's crook is a very simple act, but as performed by one who represented the Good Shepherd, it expressed a most fearful truth—the final abandonment of the flock by the only being who could feed, guide, or defend it. Ever since, the miserable sheep have experienced the weight of Jehovah's words: 'Woe unto them when I depart from them!'

3. The consideration of the interesting critical and exegetical questions suggested by the quotation of vers. 12, 13, in Matthew xxvii. 9, 10, properly belongs to the interpretation of that Gospel. See Lange *in loc.* Although the Evangelist attributes the language he cites to Jeremiah, there can scarcely be a doubt that he does in fact quote from Zechariah. The case then is one which illustrates very well the principle upon which such applica-



Uses of the Old Testament are made. The substance of the thought contained in vers. 12, 13, is that the services of the good shepherd were contemptuously undervalued and rejected by the flock, and that this scornful rejection was indignantly rebuked by the Lord. Now this would have been fulfilled even had there been no sale by Judas for a precise sum of money; and no application of that money to a specific purpose. Just as in the corresponding case in ix. 9, 10, the prediction respecting our Lord's lowly and peaceful position and character would have been accomplished, had He not made his formal entry into Jerusalem riding upon an ass. *But is pleased the Lord in this case and in this, not only to fulfill the general purport of the prediction, but even to bring about an exact correspondence in minor and unessential details.* Thus in the prophecy, Israel deprecates the worth of the shepherd's services, estimating them at thirty pieces of silver; in the narrative of the gospel it appears that this is the precise sum for which the Saviour was betrayed. In the prophecy, the sum paid for the possession of the shepherd was indignantly cast away by him; in the history it was so ordered by the Lord that the priests and elders did not dare to put in the treasury the price of the Saviour's blood, for they said, "It is not lawful." In the prophecy the thirty pieces of silver are thrown to the potter, i. e., contemptuously spurned, yet this is done in the temple; in the history the money which the wretched traitor had received was brought back by him to those who had given it, and when they declined to take it, "he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple;" but the ecclesiastical authorities, unwilling to apply the coin to any sacred use, devoted it to the purchase of ground to be used as a burying place for strangers, and the land which they purchased was "the potter's field," a field which doubtless was selected because it was so broken and marred as to be unfit for agricultural purposes, but which yet in its very name contained a peculiar suggestiveness. Thus did divine providence bring about a striking correspondence between the symbolical treatment and action of the prophet and the actual course of events in the betrayal and rejection of our Saviour.

4. The choice of men never lies between a good shepherd and none at all, but between a good shepherd and a bad one. Israel of old rejected the gracious provision offered by the Lord Jesus, and the alternative was ruin. The language of the prophet is vigorous and incisive. He describes a shepherd who not only fails in every duty of his office, but does the exact opposite, wounding where he should heal, and devouring whom he should feed, until the flock is miserably destroyed. But even more forcible are the words of the Saviour (Luke xix. 41), when he wept over Jerusalem, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." The fulfillment of these fearful words is well known. The ruin of the place and people was overwhelming. Scarce any siege in the history of the world was attended with such cruelties and horrors as preceded and followed the fall of Jerusalem. There was a deliberate and

energetic effort to exterminate the race. The whole power of the Roman Empire was brought to bear upon this one province, as Merivale says, "with a barbarity of which no other example occurs in the records of civilization." And the subsequent history of the Jews for many centuries illustrated in the same manner the symbol of Zechariah. Their rulers were evil shepherds, mock shepherds. Giving nothing, they exacted everything. They taxed, they pillaged, they oppressed, they insulted, habitually and on principle. The Jew was an outcast without any rights, and when tolerated it was only as a sponge to be squeezed when it was full. The furious crowd in the judgment hall of Pilate said, "His blood be on us and on our children." They were taken at their word, and the self-imposed malediction followed them from age to age and from country to country, and does not seem even yet to have been exhausted.

5. God often uses instruments which He afterwards destroys, scourging with a rod and then breaking the rod and casting it into the fire. The worthless shepherds who, battered like vultures on the wretched flock of Judaea, the haughty Romans who inflicted the divine judgments upon the obstinate and incorrigible nation, were themselves in turn exposed to a righteous retribution. The time came when there was a sword upon their arms and their eyes. She who had spoiled so many lands and peoples was herself spoiled, and the city which had gathered into her walls the precious things of all the earth became the prey of the barbarian. Her former inhabitants have disappeared from the face of the earth, and new races occupy their seats, while the Jew still lives, the lineal and indubitable descendant of the men among whom our Lord was born and by whom He was rejected. The arch of Titus commemorates in pictured stone the overthrow of Judaea and the plunder of its sacred vessels, but it likewise commemorates the overthrow of the conqueror and the utter ruin of that vast empire which survives only in these mute relics of its ancient grandeur.

#### EXPOSITIONAL AND PRACTICAL

MONTE. ver. 6. Wicked rulers are a curse of God on a wicked nation. Now as religion tends to prevent such rulers, or at least prevent their choice, there is an obvious connection between politics and religion. Church and State may and ought to be separated; politics and religion ought not, for thus the State becomes exposed to the curse of God, and political evil follows in the train of moral evil. — Ver. 7.  *Bands.* Union of feeling in a people is a mark of the favor of God, and disunion a token of his wrath, and usually the beginning of a downfall. — Ver. 8. Christ cannot be rejected with impunity. Even the Jews who "did it ignorantly in unbelief," paid a terrible penalty for their crime; how much more terrible will be the punishment of those who have all their unbelief without any of their ignorance. — Ver. 12. Men now sometimes reject Christ for a far less reward than thirty pieces of silver, and of course with far more guilt than Judas.

WATSON. Ver. 10. *Break my covenant with all peoples.* "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel, for the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the

lot of his inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9). This was God's compact with all nations and with Israel. He assigned a special inheritance to Judah; and no people could deprive them of it as long as they were true to Him. But now that they have rejected Christ, He has broken that compact: Jerusalem is trodden down by the Gentiles, and the Jews are wanderers and outcasts in all lands. — Ver. 15. *A foolish Shepherd.* Good shepherds, says Cyril, have a light pastoral staff by which they guide the sheep; but the evil shepherd maltreats and belabors the sheep with rude handling. So in spiritual things, the good Christian pastor deals gently, tenderly, and lovingly with his flock; but the bad pastor is impatient and rules them with roughness and violence; and does not bring back the sheep when astray, nor guard them against the wolf and the robber, nor heal those which are sick; and does not feed them with the wholesome food of sound doctrine, but with poisonous heresies. — Ver. 17. *The Idiot Shepherd.* It would not be easy to point out any other shepherd who makes himself to be an idol, except the Bishop of Rome. That he does make himself into an idol is certain. The first act that he performs after his election is to go into the Church of St. Peter, and there taking his seat upon the high altar to claim and receive adoration from the cardinals who kiss his feet. Among the medals struck in the Roman

mint is one representing the cardinals kneeling before the Pope, with this inscription, *Quem erant, adorat.* Count Montalembert, in a letter written from his death-bed, February 28, 1870, protested against those votaries of the papacy who, as he says, "trample under foot all our liberties and principles, in order to immolate justice and truth, reason and history, as a sacrifice to the idol which they have set up for themselves in the Vatican."

CALVIN. *A Prayer.* Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast hitherto so patiently endured, not only our sloth and folly but also our ingratitude and perverseness, — O grant, that we may hereafter render ourselves submissive and obedient to Thee; and as thou hast been pleased to set over us the best of Shepherds, even thine only begotten Son, cause us willingly to attend to Him, and to suffer ourselves to be gently ruled by Him; and though thou mayest find in us what may justly provoke thy wrath, yet restrain extreme severity, and so correct what is sinful in us, as to continue our Shepherd until we shall at length under thy guidance reach thy heavenly kingdom; and thus keep us in thy fold and under thy pastoral staff, that at last, being separated from the goats, we may enjoy that blessed inheritance which has been ordained for us by the blood of thy beloved Son — Amen.

## II. THE SECOND BURDEN.

### CHAPTERS XII-XIV.

The fresh title here prefixed sufficiently indicates that a new *pericope* begins with chapter xii. Its leading themes are the victory of God's kingdom over the heathen world (xii. 1-9), the repentance and conversion of the children of the kingdom (xii. 10; xiii. 1), their purification from all ungodliness (xiii. 2-6), a severe sifting of the flock consequent upon the sifting of the shepherd (xiii. 7-9), and the final tremendous conflict of the Church and the world, ending in the assured victory of the former (xiv.).

If our view of the First Burden be correct, it would seem to follow that the second begins where the first leaves off, and treats of events to follow the coming and rejection of Christ. There are indeed many particulars which suggest the struggle of the Maccabees as the subject of the former part of the twelfth chapter; but that has already been treated of in the ninth chapter with specific mention of Javan or Greece as the antagonist, and why should we have it renewed here? Why should the Prophet halt in his progress and go back over trodden ground? Moreover, the twelfth chapter expressly speaks in several places of the conflict as carried on, not against one nation, but against all the peoples of the earth (see ver. 3). There is an aspect of universality of which no sign at all appears in the portion ix. 11-x. 7. It is the heathen world against the covenant people. Where now are we to look for the outward reality corresponding to this inward vision of the Prophet? Manifestly there is nothing in the history of the literal, national Israel which approaches conformity to this vivid outline. Never did they not only resist their foes, but inflict such damage upon them as could be compared to the ravages of fire among wheat sheaves. The covenant people maintained their internal constitution and religious usages until the days of Titus, but in no case did they devour all nations roundabout on the right hand and the left. It only remains then to hold that the Prophet here passes from the old to the new form of the Church, that he refers to the kingdom of God on earth after the appearance of the Messiah, and describes its trials and triumphs, its inward and outward development.

But does he refer to events yet future, or may we trace a fulfillment of his words in the past? The latter seems the more probable. As there was a chronological advance in the previous oracle, it is natural to look for one here, and to consider that the Prophet refers to different stages in the progress of the Christian Israel. In this view the struggle and victory to xii. 1-9 can hardly have any other reference than to the persecutions of the heathen world. Judah invaded, Jerusalem besieged by the nations, and yet the attempt at overthrow not only foiled but resulting in the ruin of those who made it, — what else can this be than the fierce and bloody onslaught of pagan power on the infant Church? Or if Zechariah intended to set it forth, in what other way could he in his historical relations conceive the issue and its result than the way in which it is given here? Nor is it of use to object that this is spiritualizing arbitrarily. The Christian Church is the legitimate continuation of the Old Testament Israel. There is but one Israel, one people of God from the beginning to the end. According to the

Apostle's figure, old branches were broken off and new ones grafted on, but there was only the one alive tree throughout. Gentiles when they come to Christ, are incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel, so as to become fellow-citizens with the saints, i. e., those who are already such (Eph. ii. 12-13). It is one and the same body, differing in outward and unessential characteristics, but maintaining an unbroken identity in all that belongs to substance and life.

## I. ISRAEL'S CONFLICT AND VICTORY.

### CHAPTER XII. 1-9.

A. *Jehovah's continuous Agency in Nature* (ver. 1). B. *Jerusalem ruinous to her Besiegers* (vers. 2-4). C. *Ecstasy of the Chiefs of Judah* (vers. 5-7). D. *Promise of growing Strength to the Feeble* (ver. 8). E. *Final Result* (ver. 9).

- 1 The burden of the word of Jehovah upon Israel,  
Saith Jehovah who stretches<sup>1</sup> forth the heavens,  
And lays the foundation of the earth,  
And forms the spirit of man within him.
- 2 Behold I make Jerusalem a bowl<sup>2</sup> of reeling  
To all the peoples<sup>3</sup> round about,  
And upon Judah also shall it be<sup>4</sup>  
In the siege against Jerusalem.
- 3 And it shall be in that day, I will make Jerusalem  
A burdensome stone for all peoples,  
All who lift it shall tear themselves;  
And<sup>5</sup> all nations of the earth shall gather against it.
- 4 In that day, saith Jehovah,  
I will smite every horse with terror,<sup>6</sup>  
And his rider with madness,  
And upon the house of Judah I will open my eyes,  
And every horse of the peoples will I smite with blindness.
- 5 And the chiefs<sup>7</sup> of Judah shall say in their heart,  
The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength<sup>8</sup>  
In Jehovah of Hosts, their God.
- 6 In that day I will make the chiefs of Judah  
As a pan<sup>9</sup> of fire among sticks of wood,<sup>10</sup>  
And as a torch of fire in a sheaf,  
And they shall devour on the right hand and on the left  
All the peoples around,  
And Jerusalem shall yet sit in her own place in Jerusalem.
- 7 And Jehovah shall save the tents of Judah first,<sup>11</sup>  
That the glory of the house of David,  
And the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem  
May not exalt itself over Judah.
- 8 In that day will Jehovah defend<sup>12</sup> the inhabitant of Jerusalem,  
And the stumbling<sup>13</sup> among them in that day shall be as David,  
And the house of David as God,<sup>14</sup>  
As the angel of Jehovah before them.
- 9 And it shall be in that day,  
I will seek to destroy all the nations  
That come against Jerusalem.

### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1. — Who stretches, lays, forms. The substitution of the preterite for the participle by some translators not only is gratuitous and inaccurate, but hides the allusion to the creative power of God as constantly exhibited in the continued existence of his works.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 2. — *ḥōl*. This word Hengstenberg, in the first edition of his *Christology* (followed by M<sup>oses</sup>), rendered *breast*, but in the second, he returns to the old and better version *cup or bowl*.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 2. — *gōyīm*. Here and in vers. 2, 4, 6, *peoples*. See on viii. 20.

1 Ver. 2. — The rendering of the second clause in the E. V. is impossible grammatically, and is sustained by no authority that I have seen.

2 Ver. 3. — **אֲנִי**. It is possible but not necessary to render, as E. V., "though all," etc.

3 Ver. 4. — **אֲנִי**. Astonishment hardly expresses the force of this word, which denotes a sort of wondering estimation.

4 Ver. 5. — **אֲנִי** head of a family or tribe, is not well rendered as in E. V., by *prince*, which necessarily implies something of kingly rank or power. As a title of authority it is elsewhere in Scripture used only of the heads of the Idumean tribes (Gen. xxvi. 16; Ex. xv. 16; 1 Chron. i. 41 ff.), whence Hengstenberg deduces an ingenious argument in favor of the genuineness of the second part of Zechariah (*Christology*, iv. 61), cf. on ix. 7.

5 Ver. 6. — **אֲנִי**, *Adv.* — **אֲנִי** is the dative of advantage, and the singular is used collectively as in vii. 8.

6 Ver. 6. — **אֲנִי**, usually a basin for washing (the laver of the tabernacle, Ex. xxv. 18), here is a pot or pan for scale.

7 Ver. 6. — **אֲנִי** is not "woods" — forest, but sticks of wood or faggots.

8 Ver. 7. — The reading **אֲנִי**, adopted by LXX., Vulgate, and Peshito, and found in five MSS., is manifestly due to an attempt at correction.

9 Ver. 8. — **אֲנִי** used with another preposition in the same sense, in ix. 13.

10 Ver. 8. — **אֲנִי**, *scribble* (E. V.), is not so expressive as the literal, *stumble*; cf. Ps. cv. 37, "And not a stumble in his tribes." (Is. v. 27.)

11 Ver. 8. — **אֲנִי** may here be used as an abstract plural, denoting what is divine and heavenly, or in general superhuman (cf. 1 Sam. xviii. 13; Ps. viii. 2), — a view which seems to render more obvious the contrast between the two latter clauses of the verse. LXX. renders "houses of God," which Luther follows, and which accounts for the Vulgate, "et domus David quoniam Ibi."

#### EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This chapter begins the second half of the last division of Zechariah's prophecies. It commences with the same word as does the portion chaps. ix.-xi., but in a different application. Both utterances are burdens, i. e., threatening predictions. The former sets forth calamity as the portion of God's enemies, whether within or without the ranks of his covenant people. The latter represents the same as involving temporarily and partially his own chosen followers, but in the end these attain complete deliverance.

Ver. 1. Burden. See on ix. 1. **אֲנִי** = upon or concerning, not against. The calamity involves Israel, but its full scope takes in the general body of the ungodly. Israel = the covenant nation, either in itself or as found in its true successor, the Christian Church. The Jewish interpreters, say the former, and with them many Christian critics agree (Theodoret, Calvin, a Lapide, Grotius, Veringa, Bleek, etc.), while an equal number adopt the latter (Jerome, Cyril, Luther, Albertus Magnus, Cocceius, Marckius, Calmet, Hengstenberg). Who stretches forth the heavens, ff. For the purpose of allaying any possible doubt as to the fulfillment of the prophecy, there are added to Jehovah's name several striking expressions of his Almighty power (cf. Is. xlii. 5; Am. iv. 13; Ps. civ. 2-4). The Scriptures know nothing of the mechanical view of the universe as something from which God, after having created it, stands altogether aloof. "Every day He spreads out the heavens, every day He lays the foundation of the earth, which if it were not upheld by his power would wander from its orbit and fall into ruin" (Hengstenberg). The reference to God's formation of the human spirit is intended to suggest that unrestrained and continuous agency by which He controls the thoughts and purposes of men, and is able therefore to accomplish his own purposes through them, or in spite of them (cf. Num. xvi. 23; xxvii. 16; Ps. cxviii. 13; Prov. xxi. 1).

Ver. 2. Behold, I make . . . round about.

A lively exhibition of the failure of the nations in their attack upon Jerusalem. Zechariah employs the figure common in the older Prophets, of representing Jehovah's wrath as a wine-cup which taints and infatuates nations doomed to ruin. God will administer such a potion as will make them reel and fall in hopeless weakness and misery (cf. Ps. lxxv. 9, and Is. li. 17-22; Jer. xxv. 13-17).

What elsewhere is **כִּס** = cup, here is **כִּס** = basin or bowl, the latter being used, perhaps, because many were to drink of it at the same time. And upon Judah also . . . Jerusalem. What is to be "upon Judah?" An old and wide-spread opinion says that it is a forced participation in the siege of the capital (Targum, Vulgate, Grotius, Marckius, and many later critics); but this is not required by the text, nor consistent with the context, which indicates union rather than opposition between the country and the capital. Others say, the bowl of reeling (Kimchi, Hitzig, Maurer, et al.), but this would require the preposition **בְּ** instead of **אֲנִי**.

Köhler proposes to supply **אֲנִי** as the subject, but this is forbidden by the awkward sentence it would make, and by the fact that only a city and not a land can be besieged. It is better to assume as the subject the substance of the previous clause, — what takes place at Jerusalem; and the meaning is that the country and the capital shall be involved in the same trial.

Ver. 3. And it shall be . . . a burdensome stone. The Prophet employs another figure borrowed, according to the general opinion, from one of the sports of the young men in Palestine described by Jerome as still existing in his day. They who, overrating their strength, try to lift a stone too heavy for them, not only fail, but suffer sprains and dislocations. Such a fate will befall the foes of Jerusalem, i. e., all peoples; all the nations of the earth, for so extensive is the combination against the holy city.

Ver. 4. In that day . . . blindness. Horses and riders represent the warlike forces of the enemy. The terrifying and blinding of these makes them injurious only to themselves. Upon Judah,



on the contrary, which stands here for the whole nation, Jehovah says, *I will open my eyes, i. e., for protection* (Is. xxiii. 4 (Heb.), 1 Kings viii. 29; Neh. i. 6). Cowles justly calls attention to the beautiful antithesis, "God smites with blindness the warring powers of his foes, but opens his own eyes wide on his people, to see and provide for their wants." The three plagues mentioned are precisely those with which Moses threatened rebellious Israel in Dent. xlviii. 28: "The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart." A fine historical illustration of the effect of sudden blindness is seen in the history of Elisha (2 Kings vi. 18).

Ver. 5. *And the chiefs of Judah . . . my strength.* That the leaders find their strength in the inhabitants of Jerusalem can mean only that the holy city, made such by the election of the Most High who dwells there, ensures his protection for all who seek Him in the appointed way, and that even the most dignified and powerful have to own their resource. A parallel sentiment is found in Is. lxxviii. 2: "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

Ver. 6. *In that day . . . in a sheaf.* In consequence of this trust in the divine election, the leaders consume their foes on every hand as a sheaf of five sheaves (suggets), or a torch burns up a ripe sheaf. The resulting preservation of the city is stated in the last clause, in which the first Jerusalem—the population personified as a woman, and the second—the material city as such. For the reverse condition, see Is. xlvii. 1.

Ver. 7. *And Jehovah shall save . . . Judah.* The word *tents* stands in contrast with fortified cities. These spread over the open country Jehovah will save *first*, in order that the well-defended capital may not lift itself above the defenseless land, but that both may acknowledge that "in either case the victory is the Lord's" (Jerome).

Ver. 8. *Will Jehovah defend . . . angel of Jehovah.* The Lord will exalt his people to a degree of strength and glory far transcending anything in their past experience. This is expressed by saying that even the stumbling, one who can scarce hold himself up, much less attack a foe, shall become a hero like David; and even David's house shall exceed its highest fame of old, shall become like God, nay, like the angel of Jehovah, that peculiar manifestation of Deity which once marched at the head of the armies of Israel. This very striking and beautiful climax is of itself an answer to those who deprecate the literary merit of Zechariah. But the rhetorical excellence of the passage falls far below its consolatory and stimulating power as a promise. Before them (cf. Is. xxiii. 34; xxiii. 20).

Ver. 9. *I will seek to destroy . . . Jerusalem.* This does not mean to seek out in order to destroy, but is spoken, more *humano*, to express the energetic purpose of the speaker.

This prophecy is supposed by Vitrings, C. B. Michaelis, Dathe, and others, to refer to the dealings of God with the national Israel in the end of the world, in the last great struggle of ungodliness. It is manifestly easier to interpret the passage in its details upon this literal view of its application. And yet there is great improbability in such a view. Why should the prophet, after depicting so vividly the rejection of the Good Shepherd, and the consequent overthrow of the flock, pass at once to the final scene, overlooking all the splendid triumphs of the truth during the intervening period? Would we

not naturally, from the case itself and from the usage of the other prophets, expect some allusion to the great changes in the development of the kingdom of God, and to its progressive increase among the nations of the earth? Moreover, if the national Israel are hereafter to be restored to their own land and to resume the old relations of capital and country, on what ground can we look for a consentaneous attack of all nations upon this one small people and territory? Can any imagination conceive the recurrence of a general movement, like that of the Crusades, precipitating the men and means of a continent, not to say a world, upon the sacred soil of Palestine? Of course, such a thing is possible, but in view of the vast changes in the current of human thought, in the economy of states and empires, in the ways in which races and dynasties seek to increase or perpetuate their influence, and in the distribution of political and social power, it is the most unlikely of all conceivable events. Were the Jews to day in the possession of the Holy Land, and that whether converted or unconverted, what motive could there be for any existing nation or combination of nations to assail the seed of Abraham with fire and sword? If it be claimed that there will be a revival of the bloody propagandism of infidelity or atheism, as at one period of the French Revolution, why should such an outbreak be directed against Jerusalem or Jewish believers rather than against the strongholds of the Gospel found among Gentile believers? Such an attack, if successful, would hardly affect more than an outpost of the Christian Church. The great body of the means and resources of evangelical Christendom would remain unimpaired. It is, therefore, more natural to consider this *pericope* as a general statement not only of the Christian Israel's victory over the first ten persecutions, but of the result of all its conflicts with the world's power as they are renewed from age to age.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL

1. The fundamental thought in the conception of God is that of Power. Alike in the Scriptures and in human experience we begin our view of the Most High with the fact of creation. In looking at the world around us we have an intuitive and irresistible conviction that this visible effect must have had an invisible cause, a cause adequate to its production. The universality of this conviction in all ages and lands,—rendered only the more striking by the occasional exceptions which history discloses,—entitles us to rest in it with absolute certitude. But the power which created the world must be unlimited. He who without an effort and by a simple volition called the universe into being, can do all things. To Him great and small, high and low, difficult and easy, are practically the same. All things are possible with God. But if He be infinite in this direction, He must be equally so in all others. What is there, what can there be, to limit any other aspect of his nature? Boundless power implies necessarily boundless wisdom and boundless goodness. A truncated Deity, perfect on one side, but imperfect on others, is inconceivable by us, or if the vain attempt be made to hold such an inconsequent view, the result is either Dualism or Polytheism.

Hence the perpetual recurrence in the Scriptures to this attribute of Jehovah. It is as necessary to our practice as to our theories. In all the course of the individual believer and of the Church as

large, there occur seasons when there is no other support for faith and hope than the divine omnipotence. We must look up to Him who stretcheth abroad the heavens and layeth the foundation of the earth and formeth the spirit of man within him. To feel that all things material and immaterial lie at his control as clay in the hands of the potter is a buttress of the believing soul. It sustains in the darkest hours of trial; it encourages in the endeavor after the most difficult enterprises.

It is a thought which ever makes  
Life's pathway smiles from tests;  
It is a day-break to our hopes, a  
A sunset to our fears.

2. It is said that on one occasion when at a conference of Andrew Rivin with the king of France, the latter threatened some severe measures against the cause of truth, the sturdy reformer answered, "May it please your Majesty, the Church of God is an anvil which hath broken a great many hammers." It is even so. Zion is a burdensome stone, and always has been, to her assailants. They have harmed not her, but themselves. Pharaoh pursued the children of Israel and caught them "entangled in the land, shut in by the wilderness," but when he sought to spring the trap, they escaped in safety, while he and his host sank like lead in the mighty waters. The Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, but no defeat was ever so damaging to Dagon or his worshippers as this seeming triumph. Babylon rioted in the plunder of Jerusalem, and the impious king turned the sacred vessels of the sanctuary into the drinking cups of an idolatrous revel, but the fingers of doom wrote upon the wall a sentence which numbered and finished his days the same night. Herod sought to slay the infant Redeemer, but while the child was safe in Egypt, the cruel king perished by a painful and loathsome disease. So in the bloody persecutions which attended the introduction of Christianity, one end another took up the Church as a stone to toss hither and thither, but in vain. The stone was unharmed, but the lifters were torn and lacerated. All were made to feel what the dying Julian uttered in his despair, "O Galilee, thou hast conquered!" Here, more than anywhere else, it fulfilled the saying of the devout Psalmist, "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands" (ix. 16). Every assault upon Zion recoils upon the heads of its authors, and that not simply by virtue of "the elastic nature of right according to which every infliction calls forth a counter infliction;" but in consequence of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God who taketh the wise in their own craftiness. Times without number has his providence justified the earnest counsel which Pilate's wife gave to the Roman governor in the great crisis of his life, — have thou nothing to do with that just man.

3. Yet when Zion prevails, over her foes, this result is not owing to any human or inherent strength, but to the presence and power of Jehovah. *I make Jerusalem a bowl of reeling; I make her a burdensome stone; I smite every horn with blindness; I make the chiefs of Judah a pan of fire; Jehovah saves, Jehovah defends.* Thus, throughout, the stress is laid upon the divine arm. This is the essential factor in the case. On human principles, or according to the ordinary operation of cause and effect, the world would prevail. Often every advantage is on its side; arms, wealth, influence, state-craft, learning, prestige, and numbers.

Yet the few, the weak, the unlettered, the lowly, the things that are not, bring to nought the things that are. The reason is that the excellency of the power may be, and may be seen to be, not of man but of God. In all efforts of evangelization this truth is to be distinctly recognized and made prominent. For the Lord will not give his glory to another. The seer said to Aza (2 Chron. xlv. 8), "Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet because thou didst rely upon the Lord, He delivered them into thy hand."

4. There is something stimulating in the rich promise of growth contained in Jehovah's assurance to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (ver. 8). The stumbler, the man who can scarce hold himself up, much less make an assault upon the foe, shall be made a mighty man of valor like David. His feebleness and incapacity shall merge into the strength and skill of a hero, for the Lord shall teach the hands to war and the fingers to fight. Nor is this the end. Even a great captain like David shall surpass himself, shall reach a superhuman courage and decision. He shall resemble the manifested Jehovah as he marched at the head of his conquering host in the days of old. In the sphere of spiritual things this illustrious promise verifies itself. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath cleave hands shall wax stronger and stronger. Faith gains by experience. Grace increases by exercise. The cupling which once bent with every blast and had but a precarious chance of life, ripens into a gnarled oak which spreads its branches far and wide and defies the storm. It is literally true that no degree of grace is impossible to him that believeth, for the Apostle's declaration, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," did not apply only to himself. The same provisions and promises are open to all Christians. He who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, perfects his strength in human weakness, and the trembling believer, following on to know the Lord, is lifted to a pitch of devotion or endurance or activity which once seemed as far away as the fixed stars.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL

**MOSES:** *I will open mine eye, etc.* The promise of God is the best protection of his Church in the time of peril. He may seem to forget his people in their trouble, but it will be only a seeming oblivion, for at the proper time He will open his eyes upon them, and show them that He slumbers not nor sleeps. *That the glory . . . do not magnify, etc.* The whole plan of God's dealings with man is to humble that pride, the root of which is selfishness, and the fruit of which is every form of sin.

**PRESSER:** The affliction of the Church serves first for a chastisement of God's people, but then falls back in terror and shame upon the heads of their foes.

**CALVIN:** Though the Church may be grievously tried and exposed even to death, let us learn from this passage that they are miserable indeed who through fear or cowardice separate themselves from her, and that they who cast on God the care of their safety, shall be made blessed, though the whole world were mad against them, though the weapons of all nations were prepared for their ruin, and horses and riders assembled to overthrow them, for the defense of God is a sufficient protection.

## 2. REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION.

## CHAPTERS XII. 10.-XIII. 1.

A. A plentiful Effusion of the Spirit causes Men to look upon the Jehovah they have pierced, and Mourn bitterly. (ver. 10). B. Greatness of the Mourning (ver. 11). C. Each Family mourns separately (vers. 12-14). D. A Provision for the Penitents (ch. xiii. 1).

- 10 And I will pour out upon the house of David,  
And upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
The Spirit<sup>1</sup> of grace and supplication,<sup>2</sup>  
And they shall look upon me<sup>3</sup> whom they pierced,  
And they shall mourn for him<sup>4</sup> as the mourning over an only one,  
And be in bitterness<sup>5</sup> for him as one is in bitterness for the first-born  
11 In that day the mourning shall be great in Jerusalem,  
Like the mourning of Hadadrimmon<sup>6</sup> in the valley of Megiddo.  
12 And the land shall mourn, family by family apart,  
The family of the house of David apart and their wives apart,  
The family of the house of Nathan apart and their wives apart.  
13 The family of the house of Levi apart and their wives apart,  
The family of the Shimeite<sup>7</sup> apart and their wives apart.  
14 All the remaining families,  
Family by family apart and their wives apart.  
Ch. xiii. 1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened  
To the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
For sin and for uncleanness.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 10. — רִיחַ. Noys and Henderson render "a spirit," but the absence of the article is compensated by the construct case (Green, *II. G.*, 246, 3).

2 Ver. 10 — רַחֲמֵי is rendered in E. V. "supplications," but as the word occurs only in the plural, it is doubtless to be regarded as singular in sense. The Geneva renders *compassion*, but usage is altogether in favor of the other meaning.

3 Ver. 10. — אֲנִי is to be preferred to אֲנִי, because grammatically it is the more difficult reading; it is opposed to the favorite opinions of the Jews; it is found in all the ancient MSS., and found not only in the best of the later ones but in by far the largest number of them; and it is sustained by LXX., Aq., Symm., Theod., Syr., Targ., Vulg. and Arab.

4 Ver. 10. — עָלָיו cannot be rendered "on account of it," because על after כִּי always denotes the person for whom mourning is made, and in all the following instances in this verse in which it occurs, the reference is undoubtedly to a person.

5 Ver. 10. — אֲנִי is best understood intransitively with its cognate suffix verb. The E. V. is at once more literal and more emphatic than attempted emendations.

6 Ver. 11. — הַדַּדְרִמּוֹן. A Dr. Arg. on which etymology throws no light.

7 Ver. 13. — הַשִּׁמְעִי = The Shimeite — a patronymic here just as in the corresponding case (Num. iii. 21).

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This passage presents a complete contrast to the one immediately preceding. The change is every way startling. There is not a word of war, or conflict, or victory, no reeling-up for the nations, no tureh among sheaves, no march of a hero at the head of conquering hosts. On the contrary, all is subjective, subdued, spiritual. It is a picture of penitence as vivid and accurate as any found anywhere in the Scriptures. The people are seen standing alone in their relation to Him whom they have rejected, and meditating upon the character of their great crime. One thought occupies all minds,

one feeling pervades all hearts. The experience of their great ancestor recorded in the 51st Psalm is renewed on a broad scale, and a great sorrow spreads over the community, the intensity of which is likened on one hand to that occasioned by the sorest domestic affliction, and on the other to that of a great public calamity felt to be at once universal and irreparable. Each tribe and family goes apart to weep in silence and solitude over the grievous infliction. What now is the nexus between this passage and that which precedes? It seems to be this. As the former portion of the chapter set forth the outward protection of Providence shown toward the New Testament Israel, by means of which it emerged victor from all trials and con-

fleets, and saw its enemies utterly discomfited, this portion turns to the other side of Israel's experience and deals with its inward character, showing how the covenant people become such, how the Church in its new form commences the Christian life, and obtains a title to the divine protection. It is by the bitter herbs of repentance, leading to pardon and renovation through a believing sight of the pierced Saviour, — the whole preceded and induced by a copious shower of spiritual influences of the same kind as those predicted by Joel (ii. 28), Isaiah (xlii. 3; xxvii. 15). In this view the two parts of the chapter correspond to each other and make one complete whole. The result of the failure of the shepherd in ch. xi. is shown to be not final and absolute, but a link in the chain of events which works out the fulfillment of the old covenant promises, and the ingathering of all the Israel of God.

A vast spiritual blessing is promised. It begins in the outpouring of a gracious Spirit, which produces an intense and wide-spread penitential sorrow, and this again is followed by purification and forgiveness.

Ver. 10. **And I pour out . . . supplication.** The house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem, here and in xlii. f, stand for the whole covenant people, according to a usage by which the capital represents the nation (ii. 2; viii. 8). The mention of the royal house indicates that all ranks from the highest to the lowest need and shall receive the promised gift. The "pouring out" rests upon the earlier passage (Joel ii. 28), and differs from it in defining more minutely the character of the effusion. It is a spirit of grace and supplication, which is abundantly bestowed. **וַיִּפְּחֵם** is not

= prayer (Gesenius, Noves), nor love (Ewald), but grace or favor. The Spirit of grace then is the Spirit which brings grace (cf. Heb. x. 29). It produces in the mind of man the experience of the grace of God, and this experience rousing the sense of sin and guilt, naturally leads to "supplication;" and this in turn suggests the looking spoken of. **וַיִּפְּחֵם** is applied both to bodily and mental vision, and not infrequently with the idea of confidence in the object beheld (Num. xxi. 9; Is. xxvii. 11; li. 1). The phrase, upon me, must refer to Jehovah, for according to ver. 1 He is the speaker throughout. The **לִפְנֵי** before **וַיִּפְּחֵם**, as usual defines more clearly the accusative, and thus renders impossible the rendering of Klinehi, because. Ewald and Hansen prefer the reading of a number of MSS, upon him instead of upon me; but the authority for the received text is overwhelming, and on every critical ground it is to be adopted (see Text and Gram.). The other reading seems to have arisen from an attempt to correct the Hebrew on the ground that it was impossible that God could actually be pierced, — an objection which of course falls away at once when the doctrine of the Incarnation is received. Whom they pierced. **וַיִּפְּחֵם** was rendered by the LXX.

*corruptis, reviled, or insulted*, probably because they thought the literal meaning of the word unsuitable, since they similarly avoided it in rendering xlii. 3, where the E. V. has, "His father and his mother shall thrust him through." Several Christian critics have adopted this as the figurative meaning of the verb, and translated or expounded accordingly (Theodore of Mopsuestia, Calvin, Grotius, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Maurer); but entirely

without reason, for in every other case the word is confessedly used in its literal sense (Judg. ix. 45; 1 Sam. xxxi. 4; Zech. xiii. 3); and the pathetic mourning subsequently mentioned, with the comparisons by which it is set forth, the loss of an only son or a first-born, and the wail over the good king Josiah, presupposes the occurrence of a literal death. But the point is put beyond question by the Apostle John, who after recounting the act of the soldier who pierced the Saviour's side, adds (xix. 37), "Another Scripture saith, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced;' " of course not meaning that this one act of the soldier exhausted the meaning of the prophecy, but that it was a fulfillment of it. The change of person in the quotation — *him whom for me whom*, — is due simply to the fact that in the Prophet it is Messiah Himself who is speaking, while in the Gospel John speaks of Him. Matthew makes a similar change of person in his quotation (xxvii. 9). The remainder of the verse describes the result which is to follow from this looking to the pierced One. **And they shall mourn.** The object of this verb is put not in the first person, as we should expect, but in the third, for him; but such an enallage of person is not uncommon in Hebrew. See any of the grammars for examples. That the pronoun is to be in the masculine and not in the neuter (Gesenius, Schultens, etc.); see in Text and Gram. Mourning over an only son, is of course a sign of the deepest sorrow (cf. Amos viii. 10). Similar is the death-wail over a first-born, of which the great instance is found in the last of Egypt's ten plagues (Ex. xi. 6). There was an incipient fulfillment of this prophecy in the fact mentioned by Luke (xxiii. 48), that at Christ's crucifixion, "all the people . . . smote their breasts." (The primary meaning of **וַיִּפְּחֵם** is to strike, especially on the breast). But the true fulfillment began when the multitudes at Pentecost were *pricked to the heart* (Acts ii. 37).

Ver. 11. **The mourning shall be great, &c.** The Prophet furnishes an historical illustration of the greatness of the mourning. The reference is generally supposed to be to the lamentation over Josiah, who was mortally wounded "in the valley of Megiddo" (2 Chron. xxxv. 22). Hadadrimmon appears to have been a city in this valley, and Jerome speaks of such a city as still existing in his day, although he says that its name had been altered to Maximinopolis. Josiah was a king of Judah, a pious king; and one whose death was lamented in an extraordinary manner (2 Chron. xxxv. 25). There is no need to seek for other applications of the text, such as the absurd reference of the Targum to the death of Abah, who could not have been mourned at all, much less generally or literally; or the impious suggestion of the heathen weeping for Thammuz or Adonis (Movers, Hitzig); or the frivolous notion of Pressel, that the allusion is to Sisera's mother (Judg. v. 28), as mentioned in the Song of Deborah! Equally frivolous are Pressel's objections to the common view, namely, (1) That Josiah did not die in Megiddo but on the way to Jerusalem, where he was buried and lamented; (2) that he, being now a man of nearly forty years of age, could not properly be spoken of as a first-born or only son! Hengstenberg, on the contrary, states well the reasons why just he should be introduced here as a type of the Messiah. "He was slain on account of the sins of the people; his reign was the closing manifestation of mercy on the part of the Lord; unspeakable



misery followed immediately afterwards; the lamentation for his death rested upon the mingled feelings of love, and of sorrow for their own sins as the cause of his death."

A still more elaborate description of the mourning is given in the next three verses.

Vers. 12-14. And the land shall mourn, &c. Not only the capital, but the whole land shall mourn, and this not only in gross but in detail; every family and every subdivision of a family apart. The mention of the wives apart is not to be explained from the habit of the women in all lands "to go into mourning" (Pressel), but simply as a further specification of the intensity and universality of the mourning. The mention of David and Levi is easily understood, as these were heads respectively of the royal and priestly lines. The other two names are not so clear. The old Jewish view supposed Nathan to refer to the prophetic order, and Shiméite to the teachers, who were said to have sprung from the tribe of Simeon; but Shiméite is not the patronymic of Simeon, but Shimeonite; nor is there any evidence that that tribe furnished teachers for the nation, and Nathan the prophet was not the head of any order. It is better to adopt the view (Hengstenberg, Henderson, Kell, Köhler) first stated by Luther: "Four families are enumerated, two from the royal line under the names of David and Nathan (son of David), and two from the priestly line, Levi and his grandson Shiméi; after which he embraces all together." Thus he mentions one leading family and one subordinate branch, to show that the grief pervades all, from the highest to the lowest. All the remaining families. Not those that are left after the judgment (Neumann), nor the less renowned (Köhler), nor as implying that some families shall have become extinct (Henderson); but simply the remainder after those which have just been specified by way of example. This penitential grief will not be in vain.

Ch. xlii. 1. There shall be a fountain opened, &c. This verse resumes and completes the process begun in verse 10 of the preceding chapter. It treats of the same parties, — the house of David and the inhabitant of Jerusalem, standing here as there for the whole nation. He who poured out the spirit of supplication will also provide the means of purification from sin. A fountain is shut up as long as it remains underground, or is sealed from access (Cant. iv. 12); it is opened when it breaks forth and flows freely. The reference appears to be to a twofold usage in the Mosaic ritual; one, the sprinkling of the Levites at their consecration with "water of purifying," *i. e.*, sin-water, *i. e.*, for purification from sin (Num. viii. 7), and the other the sprinkling of persons contaminated by contact with death, with the water prepared from the ashes of the red heifer, called the water of uncleanness, *i. e.*, which removed uncleanness. In both these cases the impurity denoted the defilement of sin, and the outward purification was a symbol of the inward. So the water which flows from the fountain in the text, is a water of sprinkling by which sin and uncleanness are removed. It does not need to be renewed from time to time, as was the case with the Levitical waters, but issues from a living well-spring. The newness cannot be a new water supply for the metropolis (Pressel), nor even grace in general (Köhler), nor the grace of baptism, as the older critics said; but is the blood which cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7), the blood of that sacrifice which was typified in the sin-offering of the red

heifer, the blood which removes alike the guilt and the dominion of sin.

Excursus on xli. 10. The history of the interpretation is interesting.

1. Among the Jews the early opinion was in favor of the Messianic interpretation. Thus in the Gemara of Jerusalem, it is said, "there are two different opinions as to the meaning of this passage. Some refer it to the lamentation for the Messiah; others to the mourning for *elo*." Both concurred in thinking of a dying Messiah, but one thought directly of Him and his suffering, the other of the sin which caused his death, directly or indirectly. The former took *עלי* as a masculine suffix, the latter as neuter. In contrast to this the Gemara of Babylon maintains the personal application of the passage, but says that it refers to Messiah ben Joseph who is to suffer and die, while Messiah ben Judah is always to live. And this convenient fiction of two Messiahs was subsequently adopted by Aben Ezra and Abarbanel, the latter of whom confessed that his chief object was to remove the stumbling-block interposed by Christians when they interpreted the prophecy, as relating to the crucified One. Kimehi and Jarchi denied any Messianic reference. They said that there was a change of subject, and either adopted the false reading upon him instead of upon me, or translated the following word because instead of whom, so that they interpreted, "the pierced One" = every one who had been slain in the war with Gog and Magog, and said, "they will all lament for the death of one as if the whole army had been slain." But this view is its own refutation. The translators of the LXX. had the same text as we have, but gave the sense *rex* instead of *pierced*, because they could not see the relevancy of the literal meaning. Some consideration of the same kind operated upon the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders "they shall pray before me because they have been carried away (or have wandered about)." The modern Jews, however, generally adhere to the literal sense of the verb *עלי*, and explain it in the method proposed by Kimehi, rejecting either expressly or tacitly the notion of a double Messiah.

II. Among Christians the reference to Christ was adopted without dissent by the early expositors and most of the Reformers. Strange to say, the first exception is found in Calvin, who understood the passage as referring to God, who is figuratively said to have been pierced, *i. e.*, irritated and provoked by the Jews. He, however, held that as Christ is God, manifest in the flesh, what happened to Him was a visible symbol of the substance of the prophecy, and therefore was justly cited by John as its fulfillment. This view was warmly repudiated by Calvin's contemporaries, and followed only by Grotius, and some Socinian writers. Later writers applied the words to some distinguished Jewish leader or martyr. Jahn suggested Judas Maccabeus, and rendered, "they will look upon Him (Jehovah) on account of Him whom they have pierced." Baur thought it was impossible to determine which of the leaders it was, but it was one of those who had lost their lives in the service of the true God. Bleek adopted the same view, and to get rid of the reference to

Jehovah, substituted for *עלי* the poetic form *עליו*, and rendered "they look to Him whom

they pierced." This is simply desperate, for it occurs only four times in the Old Testament, and these are all in the Book of Job, and immediately before a noun, and as it is here in the construct state, it cannot possibly be joined to the necessative *וְ*.

Nor, besides, this view fails to account for the universal mourning or the opened fountain. — Ewald, for one martyr substitutes a plurality of such as had fallen in the war with the heathen. He renders "they look to Him whom men have pierced," thus changing the text and assuming another subject for the verb, and explains thus, "the intention is to show that no martyr falls in vain, but will one day be mourned with universal love." But this is opposed to the religious tone of the first clause, grace and supplication; and to the fact that in both the preceding chapter and the following, only one person is spoken of as an object of persecution. Hofmann, after giving up his first view of a plural object, adopted another according to which he rendered, "My heroes look at Him whom men have pierced." But *לָהֶם* never means *here* (see Fürst, *sub voce*), and besides, *וְ* is

usually construed with the preposition *לָהֶם*. Nor does the sense he thus obtains at all suit the connection. An altogether different view has been adopted by Vogel and Hitzig, whom Pressel for substance follows, namely, that the Prophet speaks of himself whom he identifies with Jehovah. "The murder of a Prophet is regarded as an attack upon Jehovah himself." The statement of this view is enough to show its untenableness. For although the sender and the sent are often identical, yet no instance can be found in Scripture, among all its records of martyrdom, of a case in which the death of a prophet is represented or mourned for as if it were the death of Jehovah. Noyes, in his *Translation of the Hebrew Prophets* (ii. 387), first mentions Calvin's explanation,<sup>1</sup> and then adds, "Or the meaning may be that the people pierced Jehovah; when they recently put to death some one of his messengers or prophets who is not named." But the violent death of a prophet was not such a rare thing in Jewish history; and why should it in any case lead to such a great and universal mourning as is here described? Or, if there had been some murder of a prophet so exceptional in its atrocity as to convulse the whole nation in an agony of grief, would there not be some trace of the fact in the books of Kings or Chronicles? Yet none such is found.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. When our Lord was about to ascend to heaven He commanded the Apostles (Acts i. 4) not to allow themselves to be drawn or driven from Jerusalem, but to "wait for the promise of the Father." There can scarcely be a doubt that the passage before us contains one form or instance of the promise to which the Saviour referred. The first great gift of heaven, for which men were taught to look in the latter days, was a divine person incarnate to make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness; the next one was that of another divine person whose influences should apply the redemption effected, and thus complete the

work of the Father's sovereign love. The latter — the Holy Spirit — had of course been present and active in the previous stages of the Church's history; otherwise there could have been no Church, for the Spirit is the indispensable bond of union between God and his people. But during the old economy, owing to its very nature as an introductory, preparatory, and restricted dispensation, the gifts of the Spirit were far less rich and powerful and general and constant, than they were ultimately designed and required to be in order to effect the purposes of grace. Hence the promise of an effusion which should not be intermittent or partial, either in its nature or its subjects, but every way adequate to the necessities of the case. This promise was given by the older Prophets, Joel (ii. 28, 29), Isaiah (lix. 21), Jeremiah (xxxix. 33, 34), Ezekiel (xxxvi. 27), and is now resumed after the exile by Zechariah, who uses the very term (*נִשְׁפָּךְ* = pour out) employed by Joel three centuries before. (Isaiah uses a different word, *נִשְׁפָּךְ*, but of the same signification.) The effusion is not to be slight or scanty, but generous and abundant; a pouring rain from the skies, overcoming all obstacles, reaching all classes and effecting the most blessed and durable results. Its precise influence as conceived by Zechariah, is in the way of overcoming depraved natural characteristics by imparting grace and developing this grace in the exercise of supplication. All true and successful prayer is "in the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 18, Jude 20). Paul had often gone through the forms of supplication in his unconverted career, but it was only when spiritually enlightened that it could be truly said of him, as it was, "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts ix. 11). In the view of a thoughtful mind, prayer itself is hardly so great a blessing as the promise of a divine Spirit to help our infirmity and make intercession within us. (Rom. viii. 26.)

2. This passage is singularly happy in pointing out what all experience has shown to be the chief means of kindling evangelical repentance, — the apprehension of a crucified Saviour. Men are indeed convinced of sin in various ways. Natural conscience sometimes inflames remorse to a fearful pitch. Sudden judgments, or what are thought to be such, stimulate fear until reason is eclipsed. A keen sense of shame proves to be a sorrow of the world which worketh death. But the true, healthy conviction of sin, the repentance which needeth not to be repeated of, is born at the cross. There the sinful soul sees its sin as it sees it nowhere else in the world, sees all the villainy, malignity, and inexcusableness of its past life, and is thoroughly humbled and prostrated in contrition. It becomes conscious of its own share in the dark and bloody crime of Calvary. As one of those for whom Christ died, it had part in driving the nails and pushing the spear, and is justly liable to the aggravated doom of those who with wicked hands crucified the Lord of glory. Hence all pleas in extenuation are given up, all excuses are left to be frivolous. Nothing is left but a fearful looking for of judgment, so far as the soul's own merits and claims are considered. But this very conviction of total unworthiness is accompanied with a conviction of Christ's wondrous love in bearing the cross, and an inspiration of hope in the efficacy of his atoning death. Thus the arrow that kills bears with it the balm that makes alive. The true penitent says, "I am lost, for my sins have slain my Lord; nay, I am saved, for my Lord died that those very sins should be blotted out." So the re-

<sup>1</sup> So far as I have observed, every writer of whatever school is glad to get the sanction of this great name for his opinion.

penitence is real, deep, and hearty, but it is not sudden, angry, or despairing. It grows keener and more comprehensive by experience, but faith and hope are growing in like measure, and thus the equipoise in which the spiritual life began is maintained even to the end. Even at the height of his usefulness Paul felt that he was not worthy to be called an Apostle, and at the close of life called himself chief of sinners; yet he knew whom he had believed, and expected a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him "in that day."

3. There are two striking peculiarities of penitential sorrow,—its depth and its solitariness. The Prophet uses the strongest metaphors known to human experience. No pang which death can inflict is so severe as that which wrings the heart of parents following to the tomb the remains of a first-born or an only son. It seems as if all hope and joy were interred in the same grave. So again a great national calamity is intensified by the reciprocal influence upon one another of all who are affected by it. When President Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, a shuddering horror seized every heart throughout the land, and multitudes who had never seen the kindly leader were as deeply moved as if the blow had fallen on their own kindred. A gloomy pall settled down over all hearts and all households. But penitential grief which is awakened by the sight of a pierced Saviour is as real and pervading as that which proceeds from any outward affliction, personal, domestic, or national. Its theatre is within. There are no outward manifestations, but the feeling for that reason is the more concentrated and intense. The soul renews the experience of the royal penitent,—my sin is ever before me. But the stricken soul mourns apart. As there is a joy, so there is a sorrow, with which a stranger intruded doth not. The relations of the soul to God are so delicate that all shrink instinctively from exposing them to the view of others. Deep grief is necessarily solitary. In its acmé, neither sympathy nor fellowship is sought or allowed. Much more must this be the case when the grief is spiritual, for the hand of God which causes the pain alone can cure it, and the soul nauseates all other comforters. David Brainerd mentions that on one occasion when he was preaching to his Indians, the power of God came down among them like a mighty rushing wind. "Their concern was so great, each for himself, that none seemed to take any notice of those about him. They were, to their own apprehension, as much retired as if they had been alone in the thickest desert. Every one was praying apart, and yet all together." Cowper is not the only penitent who could say in truth,—

"I was a stricken deer that left the herd."

The immediate prompting of all who become convinced of sin is to fly to some solitary place and be alone with God, unless indeed, as in the case of Brainerd's Indians, the absorption of mind is so complete that they are insensible to the presence of others. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and a godly sorrow shuns companions until it has wrought "a repentance unto salvation not to be repented of" (2 Cor. vii. 10).

4. Repentance of itself, however deep and thorough, is of no avail toward justification. It does not repair the evils of wrong-doing even in common life, any more than in the sphere of religion. The spendthrift may bitterly mourn the extravagance which ate up his estate, or the deb-

auchee the excesses which ruined his constitution, but in neither case does the penitence bring back what has been lost. It is the same with the sinner. Tears and penances are no compensation for sin. Sin is a debt (Matt. vi. 12), and a debt is satisfied only by payment. The payment may be made by one person or by another, but it must be made, or sin remains with its legal and endless consequences. Hence the fullness of this passage of the Prophet, which to a most elaborate painting of the distress for sin caused by a believing apprehension of the cross, appends the true and only source of relief for that distress,—the fountain set flowing on Calvary. There must be aid from without. A continuous baptism of tears is of itself impotent. Nothing avails but a provision by the Being whom sin has offended, and just this is furnished in that blood of sprinkling which was symbolized in so many ways in the Old Covenant. Apart from this, nothing is left for a conscious sinner but despair.

5. A striking expression of this is given in two passages in the New Testament, evidently founded upon the words of Zechariah. In Matt. xxiv. 30, our Lord says, "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." In Rev. 1:7 the beloved disciple resumes these words with an additional particular, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." All men are to see Christ, not merely in his glory but abearing the scars by which that glory was won. Some see Him so as to be subdued into a salutary contrition; they are drawn to Him by irresistible attraction, and while they mourn over sin rejoice in the ample and gracious pardon He bestows. Others, alas, are to see Him, not voluntarily but by a necessity which they would fain escape! They see Him a lamb as he had been slain, but no more within their reach and for their advantage. He is to them a lost Saviour, one whose pierced side and mangled limbs express only the fearful wages and terrible iniquity of sin, but offer no hope of forgiveness and acceptance.

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL

MOORE: All true repentance arises from a sight of a dying Saviour, one who has died for us. True repentance is only love weeping at the foot of the cross, the soul sorrowing for sins that have been so freely forgiven. True religion is a personal thing, and when it takes strong hold of the heart, will lead the soul apart to solitary wrestling with God and acts of personal humbling before Him.

BRADLEY: Holy mourning for sin is a bitter thing; there comes along with it many a tear and pang; but yet there is mingled with it a comfort and a blessedness which must be felt to be known. The very look which makes the heart bleed, is a look at One who can do more than heal it. . . . Pray for this sorrow. When would you mourn and weep for your sins, if not now? Somewhere you must weep for them; would you keep back this weeping till you come to that world where tears are never dried up; where you must weep, if you weep at all, forever? And somewhere you must look upon this pierced Jesus? Will you look on Him for the first time when He opens the heavens and calls you out of your graves to his judg-

ment-seet? It is a blessed though a mournful thing to see Him now, but it is a dreadful thing to see Him for the first time in the very moment when His work of mercy is forever ended, when the fountain He has opened for sin and uncleanness is forever closed.

McCHEYNE: 1. The Great Spring. I will pour. 2. The Great Agent. The spirit of grace and supplication. 3. The Effect. They look; they mourn; they see the fountain opened.

JAY: There were provisions for ceremonial pollution under the Mosaic Economy, the brazen sea for the priests and the ten lavers for the things offered in sacrifice. There were also fountains for bodily diseases: the pool of Siloam to which our Saviour sent the man born blind; and the pool of Bethesda, where lay a number of sufferers waiting for the troubling of the waters. Christ differed from all these, as a fountain for moral and spiritual defilement, "for sin and uncleanness."

#### 4. FRUITS OF PENITENCE.

##### CHAPTER XIII. 2-6.

A. *The Extinction of Idols and False Prophets* (ver. 2). B. *The Latter to be slain by their own Parents* (ver. 3). C. *Other such Prophets shall be ashamed of their Calling* (ver. 4). D. *And even deny it when charged upon them* (vers. 5, 6.)

- 2 And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land,<sup>1</sup> And they shall be remembered no more; And also the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness, Will I cause to pass out of the land.
- 3 And it shall be, if a man still prophesy, His father and his mother, who begat him, shall say to him, Thou shalt not live, For thou hast spoken a lie in the name of Jehovah; And his father and his mother, who begat him, Shall pierce<sup>2</sup> him through in his prophesying.
- 4 And it shall be in that day the prophets shall be ashamed<sup>3</sup> Each of his vision in his prophesying; And shall no more put on a hairy mantle to lie;
- 5 And [one] shall say,<sup>4</sup> I am not a prophet, I am a husbandman, For a man has sold<sup>5</sup> me from my youth.
- 6 And [the other] shall say<sup>6</sup> to him, What then are these wounds between thy hands? And he shall say, Those with which I was wounded In the house of my lovers.<sup>7</sup>

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 2. — *יִסְרְפוּ*. Henderson in both cases renders *earth*, but needlessly. The statement is a general one, but with a local coloring.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 3. — *יִדְרֹךְ* is rendered *plunge*, in order to show that it is the same word which is used in the famous passage *alt.* 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 4. — Heng. renders *בָּשָׁם מִן הָאֵשׁ*, to *desist with shame*, but the established meaning of the phrase is simply, to be *ashamed of*. The fem. suffix in *הִתְבַּשְׁמוּ* is a peculiarity of this class of verbs (Green, *Heb. Gr.*, 100, 2).

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 5. — The singular verb here, following the previous plurals, indicates that one case is selected as an example. Noyes renders, "each shall say," but the prophet can scarcely mean that every one of the false prophets is to make the same form of denial.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 5. — *הִתְנַחֵם* has been strangely misconceived. LXX. make it *ὑπογράφω*; Vulg., *Adam meum exemplum*; Pisch. renders as if it came from *נָחַם*. The R. V. followed Kimchi in deriving the verbal form from *מִקְנֵה* — small cattle.

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 6. — The implied subject of "shall say" is, of course, the other interlocutor in the dialogue.

<sup>7</sup> Ver. 6. — *מִלְּפָנֶיךָ* should be rendered *lovers*, just as it is in all the other places where it occurs: *Lam.* 1 *Heb.* 11, 7, 8, 12, etc. *friends* is too weak.



## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

This portion announces the complete extirpation of idolatry and false prophecy, which are here taken to represent all forms of ungodliness and immorality, which they could very properly do, since they had been the chief and most dangerous sins of the covenant people in all their previous history. We have then a vivid presentation of the fruits of the penitence mentioned in the previous chapter, and of the conversion and renovation announced in the opening verse of this chapter. The passage is not to be restricted to any particular period, but describes under local and temporary forms the removal of whatever is offensive to a God of holiness and truth. It will therefore apply to every instance in which the Gospel in its leading elements, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, is truly received.

Ver. 2. **I will cut off the names of the idols.** The expressions, "to cut off the names," and "that they be remembered no more," denote the total extinction of idolatry (cf. Hos. ii. 17). Of the latter Calvin says, "his meaning is that the hatred of superstition will be so great that the people will shudder at the very name." Inasmuch as the Jews notoriously after the Captivity shrink from any approach to idol-worship, it has been claimed that this passage shows that the portion of the book to which it belongs was composed prior to the Exile. But the conclusion is not legitimate. Zechariah simply uses the forms of the past in which to depict the future. Idolatry was the common expression of ungodliness in the earlier days of the nation; how could even a post-exilic prophet better set forth the overthrow of false religion in the future than by presiding the oblivion of idols and their names? Köhler indeed deems it possible, on the basis of Rev. ix. 20, xiii. 4, 15, that gross actual idol-worship may again return, but this would be to interpret an obscure book by one yet obscurer. Possibly the reference may be to that refined idolatry which consists in regarding and serving the creature more than the Creator, and which the New Testament has in view when it declares covetousness to be idolatry (Col. iii. 5). The prophets must of course be false prophets who spoke without authority, as appears from their association not only with idols but also with the spirit of uncleanness. This latter phrase denotes not merely a pervading principle, but an active, conscious agency, standing in direct contrast with the Spirit of grace (xii. 10), which works in its human instruments and leads them to their living utterances. The false prophets as well as the true were subject to an influence from without (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 21-23, Rev. xvi. 14 with 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10 and 1 Tim. iv. 2). The completeness of the removal of this form of ungodliness is expressed very energetically in the following verses.

Ver. 3: **If a man still prophesy, . . . pierce him through.** Some infer from the opening words that the mere fact of prophesying will be proof that the man attempting it is a deceiver, since there will be no more prophets (Keil, Köhler), and they refer to Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, Is. liv. 13; but this is an extravagant and needless assumption, for the connection shows plainly enough that Zechariah has in view simply false pretenders to divine inspiration, and the passages quoted by no means imply the final cessation of the spirit of prophecy either in its broad or its narrow sense, as the New Testament plainly shows. The statement in the text

rests on Dent. xviii. 20, compared with xlii. 6-10. The offender shall die, and the first to inflict the sentence shall be his father and his mother, here made more emphatic by the addition, who begat him. Cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 11. Several expositors modify the meaning of **נִבֵּן** so as to make it = *bind* or *scourge* (LXX., Peshito, Calixt), but there is no ground whatever for this in the origin or usage of the word, nor does it suit the context.

Ver. 4. **Prophets shall be ashamed . . . to lie.** The revolution will be so great that these pretenders shall become ashamed of their claims, and strip off the outward token of their occupation. The hairy mantle worn by the prophets (2 Kings i. 8) was not a form of ascetic discipline, but a *sermo propheticus realis*, a symbol of the prophet's grief for the sins which he was commissioned to reprove. It was an acted parable of repentance. The same remark is true of John the Baptist's "raiment of camel's hair and leathern girdle" (Matt. iii. 4). To lie, i. e., to give themselves the appearance of prophets, and thus impose upon the people. Thus far Zechariah has spoken of those who spoke falsely in the name of the Lord; and Hengstenberg supposes that he now turns to another class of pretenders who spoke in the name of strange gods, — a view which seems required by his interpretation of the last word of ver. 6. But no break or transition is apparent in the passage, and there is no necessity for violently introducing a new subject.

Vers. 5, 6. **I am not a prophet . . . lovers.** A dramatic representation of the means by which one of these deceivers endeavors to escape detection. Charged with his crime, he denies it, and claims to have been nothing more than a common tiller of the soil. In support of this claim he asserts that this is no recent circumstance, but that he has been sold from his youth. **נִבֵּן** = to acquire, h. *buy* (Is. xxiv. 2), in Hiphil would naturally = to cause to buy, i. e., to sell. Fürst and others make Hiphil the same as Kal. The sense is the same according to either rendering. There seems to be no reason for considering the verb a denominative from **נִבֵּן**, *seruum facere* (Maurer, Köhler). To this denial is opposed the question as to the origin of the scars the accused person bears, — **wounds between thy hands, i. e., upon the breast.** Cf. 2 Kings ix. 24, where "between the arms" evidently has this meaning. (In Arabic the

cognate phrase, **نَيْن يَدِي**, occurs frequently, in the sense *coram eo*.) The questioner considers these gashes upon the person as palpable evidence that the man has wounded himself in connection with idolatrous worship (1 Kings xviii. 28; Tibullus, l. i. 43; respecting the worship of Cybele), and asks an explanation. The reply is that he received them in the house of his lovers, which some explain as = impure, sinful lovers, i. e., *idols* (Hengstenberg), in which sense they say that the Piel of **נִבֵּן** is always used (which, however, cannot be affirmed of Jer. xxii. 20, 22, Lam. i. 19); but as the form necessarily signifies only intense affection without regard to quality, I prefer the opinion of those who explain it as = loving friends, and understand the accused person as maintaining that the scars are simply the result of ebulliments which he had formerly received when in the house of his relatives. It seems more likely that such a man would resort to an evasion of this kind than that

he would make the frank confession involved in the former view.

"This verse is commonly applied to the sufferings of Christ, but without any further ground than its mere proximity to that which follows, in which His and His sufferings are clearly predicated" (Henderson). It is quite impossible on any critical ground to vindicate such an application, although Henderson is far astray when he assigns as a reason that "in no tolerable sense could the Jews be called Christ's lovers or friends," for it is written (John 1. 11), "He came unto his own, and his own (al. His) received him not," and the Apostle (Rom. ix. 5) speaks of his kinsmen as those "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came."

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. Idolatry and divination are mentioned by Zechariah, as has been said, only as typical forms of error and sin. But it is singular how well they express the prevailing evils with which the Church is called to contend in modern times. The gross idolatry of the heathen has disappeared from Christendom never to return; but its place is taken by a more refined and more dangerous error of the same sort. There is a devotion rendered to wealth, to pleasure, to position, to genius, which is wholly inconsistent with the just claims of our Maker. There is a materialism which, although glozed over with high-sounding names, is as repulsive to the true honor of God as the worship of Baal or Ashtar. It dwells on great physical achievements, discoveries in nature or inventions in art, scientific triumphs, or even the multiplication of social conveniences, as if these were the all in all of life and of man. The next world is ignored. God is turned into a mere name. He is not enough thought of to be actively opposed; and men say in Gibbon's famous formula, all religions are equally true in the eyes of the people, equally false in the eyes of the philosopher, and equally useful in the eyes of the statesman. Now this cool indifference, this pervading earthliness of character and pursuit, is not simply the rejection of God, but the enthronement of something else in His place, i. e., idolatry. And it needs all the energy of a true spiritual faith to overcome it. If the Church is ever to fulfill her function, she must insist that the life is more than meat and the body than raiment; that means are not ends; that man is not merely an animal of the better class, more highly organized and of larger intelligence; but that he is a spiritual being, allied to the Infinite Spirit and able to reach the true goal of his existence only in willing obedience to that supreme Spirit. Anything else than this, whether it be the worship of wealth, or the worship of science, is treason to God. It puts the creature in the place of the Creator, and so prepares the way for all ungodliness and unrighteousness. A religious basis is essential to a permanent morality, and although the late Mr. John Stuart Mill held that there could be a religion without a personal God, all experience is against his crude notion. Men who begin by denying the rights of their Maker will sooner or later end by denying the rights of their fellow-men.

2. The world has often flattered itself that "the false prophet and the unclean spirit" have completely passed away, that science has effectually disposed of superstition; that the progress of education and intelligence has put an end to soothsaying and nec-

romancy. Yet our own generation has completely exploded this flattering dream. The heart of our own enlightened land where the schoolmaster has been abroad for generations, has witnessed the resurrection and diffusion of errors which are usually considered as belonging only to the twilight of civilization. The miserable first king of Israel resorted to the witch of Endor, only after every other door of knowledge had been hopelessly closed against him; but now under the blaze of a completed revelation, with Christ at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit promised to all who seek aright, men revive an antiquated delusion and seek for the living to the dead. Nay, many who reject and scoff at the Scriptures, receive with implicit faith what purport to be communications from the ghosts of the departed. It is a fulfillment of the Apostolic declaration (2 Tim. ii. 4), "They who turn away their ears from the truth shall be turned unto fables." Man stands too close to the unseen world to deny or ignore its existence; his own condition here with its dependence and exposure makes him look wistfully for something higher and better. If that craving is not satisfied legitimately, it will be illegitimately. The alternative to Faith is not unbelief but misbelief. Men must believe something. If they obey the laws of evidence, they will receive the only proven revelation from the invisible world; if not, then all that remains is belief without evidence, that is, superstition. Nor will this be altered if there be a common school, and a printing-press, and a scientific association in every hamlet of the land. No culture of the intellect can destroy or smother man's natural and spiritual nature. The heart, the conscience, the sense of responsibility, will still survive and demand some appropriate nutriment. To offer to these the latest discoveries in physics, is to offer stones instead of bread, or a scorpion instead of a fish. If they do not receive the living oracles of the Spirit of holiness, they fall into the hands of "the spirit of uncleanness," whose working is with lying wonders and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved (2 Thes. ii. 9, 10).

3. The energy of moral rebuke in a healthy state of Zion, is well shown in the pictorial representation of the Prophet. In the fifth Book of Moses provision is made for the prompt and severe punishment of any one who should introduce the worship of a false god (Deut. xiii. 6-9). The Jewish commonwealth, being an actual theocracy, idolatry was simply and literally high treason; a blow at the life of the state, and as such a capital crime. Hence no degree of kindred or affection was allowed to exempt any one from denouncing such a criminal. Even a man's nearest relatives were to be the first to put their hands to his execution when he was found judicially obnoxious to this penalty. Even so, declares Zechariah, in days to come will the parents who naturally cling to a prodigal boy, even when he may be hated and despised by all the world, yet overcome their affection, and themselves thrust through the child who is a lying prophet. The representation is strong, but not exaggerated. Literally understood it is of course impossible. Under the Gospel civil punishments for religious errors have and can have no place. But the underlying thought — intense and absolute loyalty to God — is as appropriate now as it ever was. The religious element in man's nature is to become dominant, nay supreme. Loyalty to God, like Aaron's rod, is to swallow up all other

affections. Nothing is to come into competition with allegiance to truth and holiness. Our Lord presented the duty with all plainness: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 37). It often happens that the claims of relatives and the claims of Christ come into collision; and when they do, the former must give way. We must choose to displease those whom we most love on earth rather than displease Him who died for us on the cross. This doctrine is quite repulsive to the sentimentalists who exalt the domestic affections to the highest place in human esteem, but it is none the less true, being indeed a simple corollary from the first principle of all religion, that the object of worship is to be loved supremely, and all other beings, however near or dear, subordina-ately.

4. But this is a very different thing from the self-inflicted tortures of the heathen and of all false religions. The man in the text with "wounds between his hands," represents a class found in all ages and lands. Clear references to these are found in the Scripture (Deut. xiv. 1; Jer. xvi. 6; xli. 5), and an actual instance is seen in the priests of Baal in their contest with Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 28). The custom originated in the uneasy consciousness of guilt and of the necessity for expiation. Men in their blindness conceived that by the merciless punishment of their own bodies they would render a species of satisfaction, and so regain the favor of the offended deities. The folly of this form of worship is well exposed by Seneca (quoted by Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, vi. 10), and yet it is not so absurd as it would seem. For if a man believes that the gods will exact some suffering for sin, and that by inflicting it upon himself he may forestall their action and get off on cheaper terms, it is not easy to refute him on rationalistic grounds. The difficulty in his case is that conscience is aroused, and yet there is no knowledge of the doctrine of substitution or atonement. Hence even in Christian lands, whenever that doctrine is not understood in its simplicity and fullness, the same thing occurs in a less aggravated form. Fasting and mortifications and penances of various kinds are cheerfully endured as compensations for guilt. It is hard for poor human nature to learn that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Yet nothing is clearer in the Scripture than that

the will-worship which consists in pains and privations, inflicted and endured for their own sake, is most offensive to the Most High. He Himself never sends afflictions unless there is a need, be, and He does not ask us to be other than Himself. Self-denial is indeed a large part of the Christian life, but it is self-denial for an object beyond itself—not as satisfaction for sin or a price paid for heaven, but out of love for Christ; as a means of cultivating holiness or of winning souls for the kingdom. Privation borne with such views is indeed an honor and a blessing; but if inflicted for its own sake, it puts even such a transcendent genius as Pascal with his hair shirt and iron-pointed girdle, on the same level with the self-gashed devotees of Baal, or the forsworn diviner whom Zechariah describes.

#### HOMEILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

MOORE: Ver. 3. Love to God must be paramount to all other affections, even the most tender. It is in our present imperfect sanctification inconceivable how we could acquiesce in the perdition of our children without a pang that would poison all the bliss of heaven, and yet it shall be so. Much as we love them, we shall love God and his law immeasurably more. — Vers. 4-6: Sinners shall at last be made to confess their sins and the justice of their punishment; and the bitterest drop in the cup of their agony will be that they have wrung it out for themselves, and that it is all just.

CALVIN: *Falsehood hast thou spoken in the name of Jehovah.* If we rightly consider what this is, it will certainly appear to us more detestable than to kill an innocent man, or to destroy a guest with poison, or to lay violent hands upon one's own father. The greatest of all crimes does not come up to this horrible and monstrous wickedness.

JAY: *Wounded in the house of my friends.* There are four kinds of such wounds. (1.) Those arising from their just reprobations. (2.) Those that result from their sufferings. (3.) Those produced by our being bereaved of them. (4.) Those inflicted by their improper conduct. Again. If the Lord Jesus be the sufferer, He is wounded in the house of his friends, by their negligent conduct—by their selfishness—by their distrust—by their timidity—by their gloomy conduct—by their unholiness. His question is, Is this thy kindness to thy friend?

#### 4. THE SWORD AWAKING AGAINST THE SHEPHERD AND THE FLOCK.

##### CHAPTER XIII. 7-9.

- A. *The Shepherd is smitten at Jehovah's Command, and the Sheep scattered, yet not hopelessly* (ver. 7).  
 B. *The Excision of Two Thirds of the Flock* (ver. 8). C. *A further Refinement by Sorrow with a joyful issue* (ver. 9).

- 7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,  
 And against a man, my fellow,<sup>1</sup> saith Jehovah of Hosts;  
 Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered,  
 And I will bring back my hand<sup>2</sup> upon the little ones.  
 8 And it shall be in all the land, saith Jehovah,  
 Two parts therein shall be cut off,<sup>3</sup> shall die,  
 And the third shall be left therein.

- 9 And I will bring the third part into the fire,<sup>4</sup>  
 And will refine them as silver is refined,  
 And will try them as gold is tried;  
 He<sup>5</sup> shall call upon my name and I will answer;<sup>6</sup>  
 I will say,<sup>7</sup> It is my people,  
 And he shall say, Jehovah is my God.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 7. — **בָּרַךְ עֲמִיתִי**. Three *tan* nouns are in apposition, just as in the analogous phrase **אִשׁ הַיִּתְּנָה** in Deut. xxiii. 8.

2 Ver. 7. — **הִשְׁבַּרְתִּי יָדִי** = return my hand, stretch it out again. Cf. 2 Sam. viii. 3.

3 Ver. 9. — **יִקְרָאוּ** = shall be cut off. In xiv. 2 this verb denotes cutting off by transportation, but here its sense is determined by the following verb.

4 Ver. 9. — **בָּאֵשׁ**. Into the fire, is more literal and expressive than the E. V. *through*.

5 Ver. 9. — **הוּא**. He shall call. It is better to preserve the singular in the rendering, as more idiomatic and more vivid.

6 Ver. 9. — **אֶעֱנֶה** = not simply *will answer*, as in E. V. (although that necessarily includes a reply), but distinctly, *answer*. Cf. Is. lxxv. 24, *ill.* 17. So Dr. Riggs (Emendations).

7 Ver. 9. — **אֶמְצָא**. Before this predicate, the English translator of Calvin says that a *vay conversive* is dropped, which he undertakes to supply from the LXX, Syriac, and Arabic versions. But the addition is as unauthorized as it is tasteless.

## EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Here again there is evidently a very sudden change of subject. The prophet passes at once from reconciling the evasions of a pretender to prophecy to a dramatic representation of the good shepherd suffering under a divine infliction. No transition could well be more abrupt. Moreover, he seems to turn back on his course, quite forsaking the chronological order he has heretofore pursued in developing the Messianic revelation. In the ninth chapter he set forth the lowly king, individualizing his peculiar entrance into the holy city; in the eleventh he gave a symbolical representation of his rejection by the covenant people, with a distinct allusion to the wages of his betrayer; in the twelfth he stated the wonderful efficacy of the sight of his pierced form in awakening the deepest penitence and securing pardon and renewal. Yet here instead of advancing farther, a return is made to the fact of the Messiah's death. How are we to account for this startling transition and seemingly retrograde movement? Of the former, Professor Cowles (*M. P.*, p. 367) suggests an ingenious explanation founded upon the law of association of ideas. "The close analogy between the false prophet, whose hands had been gashed and pierced 'in the house of his friends,' and the Messiah, whose hands were pierced in a death by crucifixion among those who ought to have been his friends, suggested the latter case and led the prophet to speak of it here." The learned Professor has certainly given the clew to the connection, but I should prefer to state it in a different way. The relation is one of contrast rather than of likeness. Zechariah had been speaking of a miserable pretender to prophecy, a man marked with the scars of his reasonless wounds received in idol-worship, and vainly attempting to falsify their origin. Now he turns to the true prophet and teacher, the faithful shepherd whose scars are real and significant, who was not only wounded but slain, and whose death was the salvation of his flock. But in stating this fact, the prophet introduces a new and peculiar element in the tragedy, — one which he at

least had not before emphasized or even adverted to. This is the immediate agency of Jehovah in bringing about the bloody result. It is God who arouses the sword sleeping in its scabbard. He points it at his own fellow, He gives the command to thrust it home.

Here then is a sufficient reason for the seeming reversion of an orderly progress. It was desirable to suggest the divine agency in the atoning death of the Good Shepherd, and that not simply for its own sake as indicating the completeness and perpetuity of the satisfaction rendered (Is. liii. 10), but also in order to set forth the assimilation of character and course between the Shepherd and his flock. Both are to suffer, although in different relations and for different purposes. The smiting of the leader involves in the first instance at least the scattering of the sheep. And although Jehovah will turn his hand for good upon the little ones [the little flock, Luke xii. 32], yet afterwards there will be severe and most destructive visitations, cutting off two parts out of three, and even the third part that remains is not to escape unscathed. It shall be cast into a furnace; and there be subjected to intense and protracted heat, until as in the case of the precious metals the dross and alloy are consumed and the pure gold and silver is left. The head and the members of the spiritual body then are to pass through a like experience. He suffered, and they also shall suffer. And this statement forms a necessary limitation of the glowing passages in earlier predictions which seem to promise unbroken prosperity and an endless train of outward blessings (ix. 17, x. 7, 12, xii. 6, 9). On the contrary, while the flock will have "peace" in its shepherd, peace in its largest and best sense, yet in the world it shall have "tribulation." In the general it is true, and always has been true, that "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). The sphere of the prediction is not to be arbitrarily restricted. It speaks of "the land," of course the land of Israel, but only in so far as it represents the theatre upon which the adherents, nominal or real, of the Messiah are found, and whether they belong to Israel after the flesh or not. It is the Church of the future



in its composite nature to which Zechariah refers, and of which he affirms a characteristic feature, which is not fortuitous or unmeaning, but an express appointment of Jehovah of Hosts; intended to bring the followers of the Saviour into a fellowship of suffering with Himself.

The three verses of this passage are closely connected. First, there is a clear statement of the smiting of the shepherd by Jehovah Himself, and then a representation of the effect of this procedure upon the flock. Such effects are not transient but abiding, or rather, the immediate result typifies what is to be the general condition of the flock while it is passing through the wilderness of this world.

Vers. 1. *Awake, O sword . . . my fellow.* The object of address in this startling dramatic outburst is not some unknown person (Hitzig), but the sword itself, as in Jer. xlvii. 6. *O sword of Jehovah, how long wilt thou not, etc.* The sword here is used representatively for any means of taking life. Ex. v. 21; Rom. xiii. 4. The Romans called the right of the magistrates to inflict capital punishment, *jus gladii*. Uriah was pierced by the arrows of the Ammonites, yet the Lord said to David (2 Sam. xii. 9), "Thou hast slain him by the sword of the children of Ammon." The person against whom the sword is to execute its deadly mission is described as Jehovah's shepherd, the natural reference of which is to one or the other of the shepherds mentioned in ch. xi. Some suppose that the foolish shepherd (xi. 15, 17) is intended (Grotius, Ewald, Maurer, Hitzig), but this does not follow necessarily from his being pierced by the sword, since in Is. liii. Jehovah is represented as bruising his righteous servant in whom He finds no fault. It is, moreover, put out of the question by the succeeding clause, *the man my fellow*, which could not, on any reasonable view, be applied

to an unworthy person. *לְרֵעִי* is very variously rendered in the versions, — LXX., *fellow-citizen*, Ago., *kinsman*, Sym., *of my people*, Syr., *friend*, Targ., *associate who is like him*, Vulg., *who cleaves to me*, Theod., *neighbor*. The word *לְרֵעִי* is found only here and in Leviticus, where it occurs eleven times (xix. 11, 15, 17, etc.), and always with a pronominal suffix, and as a concrete noun. Its general force is shown in xxv. 15, where it is used interchangeably with *brother*. It is certainly an abstract noun by its formation, and is so rendered by many (Gesenius, Fürst); but the uniform usage in Leviticus is decisive against this. Moses employs the term evidently to denote a close and intimate connection. Perhaps there is no nearer English equivalent than that of the E. V., — *fellow*.

*לְרֵעִי* is not the ordinary word for man, but one derived from a root signifying to be strong; yet it is doubtful if any stress is to be laid upon this circumstance (Neumann), but it is scarcely doubtful that the term calls attention to the fact that he who is Jehovah's fellow is also a man (Job xvi. 21). Who now is this peculiar being? Not Judas Maccabæus (Grotius), nor Pekah (Bunsen), nor Jehoiakim (Maurer), nor Josiah as representing the Davidic line (Pressel), nor the whole body of rulers including Christ (Calvin), but the Messiah (Fathers, Reformers, and most moderns). The only indicated by the term *fellow* is one not merely of will or association, much less of function, but

of nature or essence. It is common to object to this view that it is foreign to the sphere of the Old Testament, which knows nothing of the trinity of persons in the Godhead, so clearly revealed in the New. But this begs the question. And if it be admitted that a plurality of persons is distinctly taught in the later Scriptures, it is the most natural thing possible to find indications in the earlier revelation pointing in this direction, — not proof-texts, nor direct assertions, but statements like those in Psa. li., ex., etc., which, although they may have been mysterious to those who first read or heard them, are to us illuminated by rays reflected back from the Light of the world. Were there any doubt it would be removed by the express allusion of our Lord in Matt. xxv. 31, 32, Mark xiv. 27, where He applies the latter half of the verse to Himself and his disciples. Yet this part cannot be separated from what precedes. Both must have a common subject. *Smite the shepherd.* The poetical apostrophe to the sword is here continued. Michaelis and others suppose the address to be indefinite, because the noun is feminine while the verb is masculine, but such an enallage of gender is not uncommon in Hebrew. See an early example in Gen. iv. 7. For the metaphor in the scattering of the sheep, see 1 Kings xxii. 17. In our Lord's quotation, he uses the LXX.,<sup>1</sup> with the exception of the initial word, which he resolves into a future, *I will smite*. This only brings out more clearly what is the obvious thought of the whole passage, — the direct agency of Jehovah in the smiting. As the Apostle Peter said on the day of Pentecost, that while the Jews had by wicked hands crucified the Saviour, yet this was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Our Lord Himself said to the man who ordered the crucifixion, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above (John xix. 11). The sheep who are scattered, are most naturally understood as the flock which the shepherd had to feed (ch. xi. 4), i. e., not the entire race of men on one hand, nor merely the Christian Church on the other, but the covenant nation, embracing both believing and unbelieving members. This is no hindrance to the specific application of the words made by our Lord in his quotation. The dispersion of the disciples upon the occasion of Christ's arrest, was but one fulfillment of this extensive statement, *I will bring back my hand*. This phrase = to make a person once more the object of one's active care, is in itself indefinite, and may be used in a good sense or a bad one. Here the former seems preferable (as in Is. i. 25), as it indicates an exception to the general rule, and this exception is made in favor of the little ones, who are apparently "the wretched of the flock." In xi. 7, 11, the poor and pious portion of the nation. Hengstenberg in *loc.* denies this, but does not seem to be consistent with himself. Indeed, the difference stated here between the whole flock scattered and the little ones mercifully revisited, is simply what the two following verses state in a more expanded form as a contrast between a general devastation of the whole body and the fate of a small portion which is preserved through the trial, and by means of it is refined, purified, and blessed.

Vers. 8, 9. These verses dilate the thought of the previous verse in regard to the scattering of

<sup>1</sup> Brier (*Modern Jews*, in *loc.*) declares that Matthew did not use the LXX., which is true in respect to the common text of the Gospels, but not in regard to the Codex Alai-

andrinus, from which he differs only in the unimportant point mentioned in the text. The Vat. and Sinai. Codex read, *καὶ ἐκείνην τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τοὺς ἐκείνην τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*

the flock and the return of God's hand in mercy to the little ones.

Ver. 2. In all the land — not the earth (Mark., Kileboth) but the land in which the Lord had undertaken the office of a shepherd, and with which the Prophet throughout is chiefly concerned (xii. 12), the holy land (Hengstenberg, Ewald, Köhler); yet not this in its literal sense, but as representing the domain covered by the kingdom of God. The prediction cannot be consistently interpreted as referring only to the national Israel.

The peculiar expression *שְׁלֹשָׁה חֳצֵי* *as a mouth of* *ice*, is taken from the Pentateuch (Deut. xxi. 17), where it indicates the double portion inherited by the first-born. In the same sense it is used by Elisha (2 Kings ii. 9); where the younger prophet by no means asked to have twice as much of the Spirit as Elijah had, but to receive a first-born's share in what he possessed, so that he might thus become his acknowledged heir and successor. Here the phrase evidently means two-thirds, since what remains is called the third. *Shall be cut off, shall die.* The latter verb removes any ambiguity lurking in the former, and shows that not only exile but a literal death is intended. This frightful sweep of judgment is paralleled by the words of Balaam, v. 2-12, where the Lord predicts that a third part shall perish by pestilence and famine, another third by the sword, and the remaining third be scattered to the winds, which of course, although it is not so stated, might be recovered again. (Cf. also the preservation of a tenth amid a general overthrow in Is. vi. 13).

Ver. 3. Bring the third part into the fire. The third part, although it will escape destruction, does not do so on the ground of inherent righteousness, but rather of grace. Its constituent parts need a sore discipline, and it is not withheld. They are refined and purified by processes as severe as those to which the precious metals are subjected. The metaphor is common in Scripture (Ps. ix. 10; Is. xlviii. 10; Jer. ix. 7; Mal. iii. 3). The Apostle Peter (1 Pet. i. 6, 7) wrote, "wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory." But who constitute this third part? Some say, the entire race of the Jews during the whole period of the present dispersion (C. B. Michaelis, Köhler, *et al.*), but, as Hengstenberg justly urges, in that case unbelieving Judaism would be regarded as the sole and legitimate continuation of Israel, which is simply impossible. The true application is to the entire kingdom of God on earth, whether composed of Jews or of Gentiles. True believers are precious in the Lord's eyes as silver and gold, and He subjects them to an intense and lengthened trial, but the design and result is not to destroy but to refine. The attainment of this result is well expressed by the concluding words, showing the mutual intercourse and confidence of the people and their Lord. They call and He answers. He claims them for his people, and they claim Him for their God. Everything is included under these comprehensive phrases (cf. viii. 8; Hosea ii. 23; Jer. xxiv. 7; xxx. 28).

Professor Cowles thus states the connection of the verses: "The manifestation of Jesus Christ to the flesh served to reveal the utter rottenness of the visible Jewish Church. When the Shepherd was smitten, the mass of that Church went to

ruin; only a few of the little ones were saved. So in the advanced ages of the Christian Church, corruption became again fearfully prevalent, and another great sifting process became indispensable before the era of the final conquest and triumph of Christ's kingdom could open" (*Jl. P.*, 369).

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL.

1. The salient point of the entire passage is the immediate agency of Jehovah of Hosts in the suffering and death of the Good Shepherd. We lose sight of an ungrateful people, of their scornful rejection of the unspeakable gift, and of the spear by which human hands pierce a royal benefactor, and are set face to face with a tragedy in which one divine person gives over another to a violent death. A man, a real, veritable man is the subject of the infliction, but that man is the fellow of Jehovah. The wondrous constitution of his personality, a divine nature wrapping around itself our humanity in an indissoluble union, rendered this possible. Its actual occurrence is the most significant truth in Christian theology. The atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ was in no sense an act of will-worship, a device from without to appease the wrath of a Moloch sitting upon the throne of the universe. On the contrary; it was the expression of God's infinite wisdom and love, the result of his own self-moved grace and compassion. As the record runs in the fore-front of the Gospel, God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son. And that Son said in prophecy, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Ps. xl. 7, 8; Heb. x. 9, 10), and in his own person, "I lay down my life; this commandment have I received of my Father" (John x. 17). It was then God the supreme, God the judge, God whose law was broken, who originated and carried through the great sacrifice. And behind all the voluntary and wicked actors in the scenes of the prætorium and the Mount of Calvary stood Jehovah of Hosts, saying, Awake, O sword. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He put his soul to grief. The Apostle speaks of the love of Christ as that which passeth knowledge; but the same is equally true of the eternal Father. "God only knows the love of God." No human plummet is long enough to sound the depths of that grace which led Jehovah of Hosts to say of his only-begotten, Smite the shepherd. The Lord Jesus was his own Son, the brightness of his glory and the very image of his being, and therefore the object of infinite complacency, dear to Him beyond all human expression or conception, and yet He spared Him not, but freely delivered Him up for us all.

2. The references of our Lord to this passage bear mainly upon its statement concerning his followers. In John (xvi. 32) we read, "Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone." Matthew (xxvi. 31) gives a later and fuller expression, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." The prophecy was fulfilled, but very far from being exhausted, in the dispersion of the disciples when our Lord was arrested. The cause of the flight of the twelve was that their faith was staggered and their confidence impaired by such an untoward event. So it has always been. "The offense of the cross" shows itself in

every generation. The ignominious death of the Shepherd is a stumbling-block to the flock. But this does not continue in "the little ones," the faithful few. They are recovered by the Lord's own hand, and made to rejoice in that which once was most offensive. This is intimated by the Saviour in the words which follow the quotation in Matthew given above, "But after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee." This going before (*wpodzo*), is a pastoral act in which the shepherd leads the way, and is followed by the flock. Just as the Saviour gathered again those who fled in fear on the night of the betrayal, so does He still gather those who at first start back from a near view of the cross.

They find that cross not only the conspicuous badge of their profession but its characteristic feature. In a remarkable passage in the Gospel of Matthew (xvi. 21-25), our Lord first foretells his own sufferings at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and then immediately proceeds to set forth similar trials as the necessary result of attachment to Him. His adherents must needs take up their cross and follow Him even to Golgotha. The motto of the Reformed in Holland — *the Church under the Cross* — is true of all believers. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." Believers then are not to count it strange when a fiery trial befalls them, as if it were a strange thing (1 Pet. iv. 12). So far from being strange, it is a normal procedure. God's people are to be "partakers of Christ's sufferings." In their case, as in his, the cross precedes the crown.

When great providential calamities, such as war, pestilence, famine, occur, they are not exempt. But the stroke which overwhelms and destroys others, is to them overruled for good. Had trees are mercilessly rooted out, but the good are only "purged" or pruned. The spurious, reprobate metal is cast away, but the genuine article comes out of the furnace purified and enabled. It was needful for them to go through the process. "The holiest of mere men is improved by passing through the fire. A high encomium was pronounced upon Job before his afflictions, yet the issue of his unparalleled probation taught him that he was vile, and laid him in dust and ashes (xi. 4; xlii. 6). Sorrows are one of the tokens of sonship; to forget this is to faint in the day of adversity. "The fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. iii. 10), the community of shepherd and flock in trials, is one of the blessed mysteries of the Christian life. Believers drink of Christ's cup and are baptized with his baptism. Companionship in sorrow links them by closer ties and brings them into tenderer communion than is possible in any other way. And so the assimilation proceeds rapidly from glory to glory. The suffering people are changed into the image of their once suffering Lord, and they justly glory in infirmities.

3. The summit of human felicity is described in the mutual proprietorship which the Prophet, following his predecessors, ascribes to God and his people. On the one hand, Jehovah says, It is my people. The foundation passage on this point is given in Ex. xiv. 5: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all peoples; for all the earth is mine." The whole earth is the Lord's, and all

nations belong to Him as Creator and Preserver but He has been pleased to choose one to stand to Him in a particular and most endearing relation.

Israel is his *יִשְׂרָאֵל*, set apart and distinguished from all others as a possession of peculiar value. Cf. Dent. vii. 6; xiv. 2; xxvi. 18; Ps. cxxxv. 4; Mal. iii. 17. Language of the same tenor is applied in the New Testament to the Christian Israel; "a purchased possession" (Eph. i. 14); "a peculiar people" (Titus ii. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 9). From the mass of fallen men, Jehovah chooses an innumerable multitude whom He condescends to call his portion or inheritance. On them He lavishes the riches of his grace, and in them He reveals his glory to the admiration of all holy intelligences. And they are fitted to this high destiny, being conformed to the image of their Lord, and obedient to his will. As such He spares them in times of trial as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (Mal. iii. 17), has "his delights" with them (Prov. viii. 31), and rejoices over them with the joy of a bridegroom over his bride (Is. lxii. 5).

On the other hand, the people say, Jehovah is my God. Not only do they acknowledge Him as divine and profess his worship in distinction from heathen or infidels, but they recognize Him as their infinite portion. The knowledge of Him is the best of all knowledge, and his service is the highest form of enjoyment. His favor is life, his loving-kindness better than life. His perfections are a sure pledge of their safety, blessedness, and glory. His gifts are many and precious, but He himself is better than them all, and the intimate and sacred communion his people are permitted to hold with Him fills the measure of their happiness. Even under the shadows of the Old Testament they found their supreme delight here. O God, thou art my God, my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee (Ps. lxxiii. 1). Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee (Ps. lxxiii. 25).

This thought is applied by Augustine (*Civ. Dei*, xxii. 20) to the future home of the spirits of the just. "The reward of righteousness will be He who Himself imported righteousness, and who promises Himself than whom there can be no gift better or greater. For what else has He said by his Prophet, 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;' what else but this: 'I will be that wherein they shall be satisfied; I will be all things that men righteously desire; life and health, and food and abundance, glory and honor, and peace and all things?' For so do we rightly understand also what the Apostle says, *That God may be all in all*. He will be the end of all our desires, who will Himself be seen without end, will be loved without satiety, will be praised without weariness. This affection, this business, this fondness of our being will be common to us all, like life everlasting itself."

#### HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

MOORE: Ver. 7. *Awake, O sword*, etc. How fearful an evil is sin when it could call forth the sword against God's own coequal and well-beloved Son! The death of Christ was the judicial sentence of God against sin, the endurance of the penalty of the law, and therefore, strictly vicarious and propitiatory. No human merit can mingle with the infinite merit of the work of Christ for He trod the wine-press alone.

**RALPH ERSKINE:** *Awake, O sword,* etc. This text, also, is a very wonderful one, as ever a poor, mortal man preached upon. For in it there is a cloud, a black cloud, a cloud of divine wrath and retribution, the cloud of Christ's bloody passion which we are to celebrate the memorials of this day; but like the cloud that led Israel in the wilderness, though it had a black side toward Christ, yet it has a bright and light side toward all the Israel of God; for this cloud of blood distills in a sweet shower of blessings unto poor sinners; there is a light in this cloud wherein we may see God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

**CALVIN:** *Will refine them,* etc. The stubble

and the chaff are cast into the fire, but without any benefit, for they are wholly consumed. But when gold and silver are put in the fire, it is that greater purity may be produced, and what is precious be made more apparent. Do any ask whether God can by his Spirit alone draw the elect to religion, and if so, why this fire of affliction is necessary? The answer is, that the Prophet speaks not of what God can do but of what He will do, and we ought not to dispute on the subject but be satisfied with what He has appointed. Though chastisement is hard while we are undergoing it, yet we should estimate it by its result, the peaceable fruits of righteousness (Heb. xii. 11).

## 5. FINAL CONFLICT AND TRIUMPH OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

### CHAPTER XIV.

**A.** *A great and at first successful Assault is made upon the Holy City (vers. 1, 2). B. Then God miraculously interposes, grants Escape, and after a mingled Condition of Things gives a final and glorious Deliverance (vers. 3-7). C. A Stream of Salvation pours over the whole Land (vers. 8-11). D. The Enemies are chastised (vers. 12-15). E. The Remnant of Them turn to the Lord (vers. 16-19). F. Jerusalem becomes thoroughly Holy (vers. 20, 21).*

- 1 Behold, a day cometh to Jehovah,<sup>1</sup>  
And thy spoil is divided in the midst of thee.
- 2 And I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to battle;<sup>2</sup>  
And the city shall be taken and the houses<sup>3</sup> rifled,  
And the women shall be ravished;<sup>3</sup>  
And half the city shall go forth into captivity,  
And the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
- 3 And Jehovah shall go forth and fight against those nations,  
As in<sup>4</sup> his day of battle, in the day of conflict.
- 4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives  
Which is before Jerusalem on the east;  
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in the centre  
Eastward and westward, a very great valley,<sup>5</sup>  
And half of the mountain shall recede towards the north,  
And its (other) half toward the south.
- 5 And ye shall flee<sup>6</sup> to the valley of my mountains,<sup>7</sup>  
For the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal,  
And ye shall flee as ye fled before the earthquake,  
In the days of Uzziah the king of Judah;  
And Jehovah my God shall come,  
All the saints with thee!<sup>8</sup>
- 6 And it shall come to pass in that day,  
It will not be light, the glorious<sup>9</sup> will withdraw themselves.
- 7 And the day shall be one,  
It shall be known to Jehovah,  
Not day and not night,  
And at evening time there shall be light.
- 8 And it shall be in that day,  
Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem,  
Half of them to the eastern<sup>10</sup> sea,  
And half of them to the western sea,  
In summer and in winter shall it be.
- 9 And Jehovah shall be king over all the land;  
In that day Jehovah shall be one<sup>11</sup> and his name one.



- 10 All the land shall be changed like the plain  
From Geba to Rimmen south of Jerusalem,  
And she shall be high,<sup>12</sup> and dwell in her place  
From Benjamin's gate to the place of the first gate,  
To the corner gate,  
And from the tower of Hananeel to the king's wine-presses.
- 11 And they shall dwell in her,  
And there shall be no more curse,<sup>13</sup>  
And Jerusalem shall sit secure.<sup>14</sup>
- 12 And this shall be the plague  
With which Jehovah will smite all the peoples<sup>15</sup>  
Who have fought against Jerusalem;  
His<sup>16</sup> flesh shall consume away while he stands upon his feet,  
And his eyes shall consume away in their sockets,  
And his tongue shall consume away in their mouth.
- 13 And it shall be in that day that  
There shall be among them a great confusion<sup>17</sup> from Jehovah,  
And they shall seize each his neighbor's hand,  
And his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor;
- 14 And Judah also shall fight at<sup>18</sup> Jerusalem,  
And the riches of all the nations around shall be gathered,  
Gold and silver and apparel in great abundance.
- 15 And so<sup>19</sup> shall be the plague of the horse,  
Of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass,  
And of all the cattle that shall be in these camps,  
Even as this plague.
- 16 And it shall be that  
All that is left of the nations which came against Jerusalem  
Shall<sup>20</sup> go up from<sup>21</sup> year to year  
To worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts,  
And to keep the feast of tabernacles.
- 17 And it shall be that whoso of the<sup>22</sup> families of the earth  
Shall not go up to Jerusalem  
To worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts,  
Upon them there shall be no rain.
- 18 And if the family of Egypt go not up and come not,  
Upon<sup>23</sup> them there shall be none,  
[Upon them] shall be the plague  
With which Jehovah shall plague the nations  
Which go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.
- 19 This shall be the sin<sup>24</sup> of Egypt,  
And the sin of all the nations  
Which go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.
- 20 In that day there shall be on the bells<sup>25</sup> of the horses,  
Holiness to Jehovah.  
And the pots in the house of Jehovah  
Shall be as the bowls before the altar.
- 21 And every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah  
Shall be holiness to Jehovah of Hosts.  
And all who sacrifice shall come  
And take of them and sacrifice therein,  
And there shall no more be a Canaanite<sup>26</sup>  
In the house of Jehovah of Hosts in that day.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 1 יְהוָה is to be connected with יוֹם = Jehovah's day. See Eng. and Orig.

2 Ver. 2 מִנְחָה. The Minchah stands here in place of Mithgah, to show that the vowel is long.

6 Ver. 2. — **הַשְׁמַלְלָה**. The Keri substitutes for this word, here as elsewhere (Deut. xiv. 20, etc.), the word **שָׁכַב** — a very needless euphemism.

7 Ver. 3. — **כִּי־**. The preposition is to be supplied from the next clause.

8 Ver. 4. — **נִי־** is not a *cas. construct.* of **נִי** (Ewald, Green), but an absolute form of the same noun (Fürst).

9 Ver. 5. — In place of **בְּקִרְיָתָם** several MSS. read **בְּקִרְיָתָם**, which is the reading followed by LXX., Aq., Sym., Targ. Aram., the first of which renders *supplexiteras, shall be stopped up*. This is adopted by Flügel, Dath, Blayney, and Boothroyd; but the sense is so lucid that some modern critics refuse even to notice it.

10 Ver. 5. — **הָרִי** is not a simple plural, but has the suffix of the first person.

11 Ver. 5. — Instead of **עֲפָרָה** many MSS. and all the old versions read **עָפָר**, but the former is to be preferred, both as the more difficult reading and as more vivid and expressive.

12 Ver. 6. — Henderson claims a preponderance of MSS. authority for the Keri **רָחֵם** over the Kethib **רָחֵם**, and the ancient versions all favor it, yet exegetical necessity compels one to adopt the latter. So Hengstenberg, Hoffmann, Kliefoth, Köhler, Keil, Pressel, Dr. Van Dyck in new *Arah. Bible*, Fürst in his new German Version, etc.

13 Ver. 8. — **הַדְּמִיָּה**. The E. V. "former" is misleading. The Geneva gives "east" which is correct. The Hebrews determined the points of the compass by looking to the east, and so what was before them was the east, and what was **אֲחֵר** = behind, was west.

14 Ver. 9. — Henderson objects to the rendering "Jehovah shall be one," that it makes "the passage teach either that Jehovah was not one before, or that he will no longer be three or trine;" and he renders "Jehovah alone shall be." But his scruples are idle. What is meant is the universal recognition of the divine unity and self-existence, and this is obtained just as well by the ordinary rendering as by the one he suggests (cf. Deut. vi. 4).

15 Ver. 10. — This is the only place where the form **רָחֵם** occurs; in all other cases **רָחֵם** is used. True, here Fürst takes **רָחֵם** for a proper noun, and renders, "like the plain of Jordan shall Jerusalem and Ramah be fruitful and inhabited" (*Lxx. sub. voc.*), but this wholly disregards the accents, and furnishes no equivalent, since the mention of such an obscure place would be unmeaning. He himself in his new German Version returns to the old interpretation.

16 Ver. 11. — **הָרָסָם**. The E. V. "utter destruction," hardly expresses the force of this word, which means such destruction caused by a divine decree = *curse* (Mal. iv. 6).

17 Ver. 11. — **יֵשׁ בְּיָמָהּ**. Here, the strict rendering *sit secure*, is more vivid than the E. V., *safely inhabited*.

18 Ver. 12. — **עַמִּים** = peoples, cf. on viii. 22.

19 Ver. 12. — **His flesh**, etc. The suffixes are all singular except in the case of the last noun, *their mouth*. Of course the meaning is "each one's" flesh, etc.

20 Ver. 13. — "Tumult" does not express the full sense of **מַהֲרֹמָה** = a panic terror or confusion (1 Sam. xiv. 20).

21 Ver. 14. — **בִּיר**. The text of the E. V. is right, and the marginal reading *against* to be rejected. See King and Crit.

22 Ver. 15. — **כֵּן** here precedes its correlative **כִּי**; elsewhere the order is just the reverse.

23 Ver. 16. — The construction is unaccountable; the subject standing absolutely at the beginning, while the predicate is appended with *con. concess.* **וְעָלָה**.

24 Ver. 16. — **מִיָּדָה** is literally "from the sufficiency of year to year," but expresses nothing more than the simple preposition (cf. Is. ix. 20).

25 Ver. 17. — The "all" supplied by the E. V. is quite superfluous.

26 Ver. 18. — **וְלֹא עֲלִיזָהִים** introduces the apodosis, and **הַנִּשְׁמָרִים** is to be supplied from the preceding verse.

27 Ver. 19. — **חַטָּאת** (LXX.: *μαρτυρία*; Vulg.: *peccatum*) should surely be rendered *sin*, however it may be explained. Dr. Van Dyck, in the new Arabic Bible, conforms to the E. V.; as does Fürst in his German Version. The Dutch Bible has, *de zonde*; Luther, *Sünde*.

28 Ver. 20. — **מִשְׁעֶלֶת**. LXX.: *χαλκός*; Vulg.: *frænum*; Luther, *Rüstung*; but the meaning in E. V., *bridle*, is now established. Dr. Riggs gives a wordy paraphrase, *trinkling bridle ornaments*.

29 Ver. 21. — **בְּנִתְּנִי**. LXX. transfer the word. Vulg. translates, — *creator*; Fürst *Krämmer*.

#### CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL.

This concluding chapter of the Prophet has been very variously interpreted. Calvin, Grotius, and others supposed it to refer to the times of the Maccabees, which for a variety of reasons is scarcely possible. Marekins, following Cyril and Theodoret, applied its opening verses to the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus, and with him agree Lowth, Adam Clarke, and Henderson; but the circumstances here stated do not correspond with the facts of history, nor if they did, could the former part of the chapter be violently sundered from its

plain connection with the latter part. The "later criticism" (Hitzig, Knobel, Maurer, Ewald, Bertheau, etc.), refer the passage to the period immediately preceding the Babylonian exile and the catastrophe then threatening Jerusalem; and when reminded of the contrast between the prediction and the facts, appeal to the ethical aim and conditional nature of prophecy as fully accounting for this. But even admitting their principle, it does not apply here, for this chapter has nothing to say of sin and judgment, of repentance and conversion on the part of the covenant people, but only of their dreadful trials and glorious deliverance. Such a prediction, addressed to Judah in the last decem-

alum before the exile, could have exerted no healthful influence, and certainly the glowing statements of the latter part of it have no counter-part in any experience of the restored people. It only remains then either with Wordsworth, Haynes, Newcome, Moore, Cowles, etc., to refer it to a period yet future, or with Hengstenberg, Keil, etc., to suppose that it describes in general terms the whole development of the Church of God from the commencement of the Messianic era to its close. In either case the chapter must be taken as figurative and not literal. The cleaving of the Mount of Olives in two for the purpose of affording escape to fugitives from Jerusalem; the flowing of two perpetual streams from the holy city in opposite directions; the levelling of the whole land in order to exalt the temple-mountain; the yearly pilgrimage of all nations of the earth to Jerusalem; and the renewal of the old sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual; these are plainly symbolical statements, but not therefore by any means unmeaning or useless. The chapter does not stand alone in the Scriptures. Parallels are to be found in Isaiah (lvi., lxxi.), Ezekiel (xviii., xxix.), and Daniel (xii.), as well as in the closing book of the New Testament.

The Prophet begins with the account of an attack made upon the holy city by all nations, who, instead of being destroyed (like Gog and Magog in Ezekiel) before getting possession of the holy city, seize and plunder it and carry away half its population, and then are met and thwarted by Jehovah, who provides escape for his people. This feature of escape inclines one to regard the passage as an ideal picture of all the conflicts of the Church with its foes.

(a.) Vers. 1, 2. *The Attack.* Ver. 1. Behold, a day cometh, etc. A day to Jehovah = one belonging to Him, appointed for the manifestation of his power and glory (cf. Is. lii. 12). The final result makes this abundantly plain. Thy spoil, etc. The Prophet addresses the city and says that her booty, not (as T. V. Moore, following the Targum, strangely imagines) that which she takes, but that which is taken from her, is leisurely divided among the conquerors in the midst of the city. The details implied in this general announcement are stated in the next verse.

Ver. 2. And I will gather . . . ravished. Jehovah collected these nations just as He roused Pharaoh to pursue Israel (Ex. xiv. 4), in the same way and with the same result. The divine purpose presides over all human wrath and wickedness, and gains its ends, not only in spite, but often by means, of them. The rising of the houses and dishonoring of the women are expressions taken from Is. xlii. 16, where they are used in reference to Babylon. And half of the city, etc. Only a part of the inhabitants are to be driven into exile, the rest remain. It was different at the Chaldean conquest of Jerusalem, for then the greater portion were carried away, and afterwards even "the remnant that was left" (2 Kings xxv. 11). The verse cannot therefore refer to that subjugation. Nor can it be applied to the overthrow of the holy city by Titus, who neither had all nations under his banner, nor left a half of the population in possession of their homes.

(b.) Vers. 3-7. *The Deliverance.* Ver. 3. Jehovah goeth forth . . . battle. God Himself goes forth against these foes, and fights for his people as He is accustomed to do in a day of battle. The latter clause does not seem to refer particularly to the conflict at the Red Sea (Jerome, Hengstenberg), but rather to the Lord's general course, as

shown in many former instances (Keil, Köhler), Josh. x. 14-42; xxiii. 3; Judg. iv. 15; 2 Chron. xx. 15.

Ver. 4. His feet stand . . . south. The situation of the Mount of Olives—which is before Jerusalem—is not added as a geographical designation, which surely would be needless, but to indicate its suitableness for the position of one who intended to relieve the holy city. His feet touch it, and the effect is that of an earthquake (Ps. lxxviii. 8; Nah. i. 5). The mountain is split through the middle longitudinally, so that the two halves fall back from each other, one toward the north, the other toward the south. The consequence would be the formation of a very great valley running east and west. To one fleeing hastily from Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives presented an obstacle of no small importance, as it did to David once (2 Sam. xv. 20); and hence the provision here made for removing the difficulty.

Ver. 5. And ye shall see . . . Judah. The people will flee into the valley of my mountains, not the Tyropæon (Jerome, etc.), but into the valley produced by the two halves of Olivet, which are properly called by Jehovah his, since He had just given them their separate existence (so nearly all critics). The reason why the fugitives should flee thither is that this level opening extends to Azal, which by almost all expositors, ancient and modern, is considered a proper name denoting a place near Jerusalem; but no trace of any such place now exists. Hengstenberg identifies it with the "Beth-Ezel" of Micah i. 11, and explains its meaning as = "standing still," "ceasing," so that what is promised is that the valley shall extend to a place which in accordance with its name will afford to the fugitives a cessation of danger. Köhler follows Symm. and Jerome in rendering it *ad proximum*, which he renders "to very near," i. e., to the point where the fugitives actually are. It seems simpler to suppose that the term refers to a place east of Olivet, well known in the Prophet's day, which by its position would show the valley to be long enough to furnish all needful shelter and escape for the fleeing people. The swiftness of the flight is expressed by comparison to that occasioned by the earthquake in the days of Uzziah; which is referred to in Amos i. 1, but of which we have no other information. Some think that the fleeing arises from fear of being swallowed up with their foes by the earthquake (Hengstenberg, Keil); but it is more natural to refer it to fear of their enemies. The added clause, and Jehovah my God comes, etc., with the suffix of the last word in the second person, indicates the lively joy with which the Prophet hails the appearance of his God, so that as he sees in vision the shining retinue of his saints, he passes from indirect to direct address, and exclaims, all the saints with thee! The saints here, according to the analogy of other passages (Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3; Dan. vii. 9, 10; Matt. xxv. 31; Rev. xix. 14), are the holy angels, and not (Vitringa) both holy angels and holy men.

Ver. 6. And it shall be, etc. The former part of this verse is very plain, but the last two words are obscure. The Keri represents an early attempt to escape the difficulty by altering the text, giving וְהָיָה instead of וְהָיָה. This was adopted by the old versions, which, besides, either assumed that וְהָיָה was synonymous with וְהָיָה, *and*, or maintained that the true reading was וְהָיָה.

Then, rendering the former noun *leo*, they got the sense, "It will not be light, but (there will be) cold and *leo*" (Targum, Peshito, Symm., Itala, and so forth). Some later critics adopting the same text coordinate the three nouns, and bring them all under the negation, thus, "There will not be light and cold and *leo*," i. e., no alternation of them (Ewald, Hensen, Umbreit). But this is a very poor sense, unsustained by any analogy in Scripture, and without force in the connection. It is far better to adhere to the Chetib, in which the only grammatical difficulty is the combination of a feminine noun with a verb having a masculine suffix, which surely is not insuperable in Hebrew.

**לְיוֹרֵךְ** means here as elsewhere *precious things*, with the additional idea of splendor or brilliancy, as in Job xxxi. 26, where the moon is said to walk **לְיוֹרֵךְ** = in brightness or magnificently. The mention of light just before suggests the thought of the stars or heavenly bodies in general, as what is intended by the glorious things. The verb then is taken in its primary sense, to be contracted (h. to curdle, to congeal); here = withdraw themselves. The whole verse then indicates a day of darkness. The lights of the earth will all disappear. What the former clause states in plain prose, the latter expresses more figuratively.

Ver. 7. And the day shall be one, etc. This verse continues the description of the sorrowful time just mentioned. The day shall be one in the sense of solitary, unique, peculiar. See the Lexicon. It is known to Jehovah, and by implication to no one else, in its true nature. Not day and not night = not an admixture of both, but neither, not a *vuxθympos* at all, because the lights of heaven being put out, there are no means of determining what is day and what night. The whole order of nature is miraculously reversed. The expression at evening time, etc., is the antithesis of the declaration in Amos viii. 9, "I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will bring darkness upon the land in clear day." At the time when according to the natural course of events darkness should set in, a bright light dawns. Some expositors compare with this verse Rev. xxi. 23-25, but the two passages are radically different. It is true not only at the end of all things, but at many a previous period in the history of the Church, that at evening time it becomes light. Some critics give the sense thus stated by Professor Cowles, "There is a gradation through three distinct stages: first, utter darkness; then, a dim twilight, like that of an eclipse; then, at the close, when you might expect darkness soon to cover the earth, lo, the effulgence of full and glorious day" (M. P., 374).

(c.) Vers. 8-11. Blessings from Jerusalem diffuse themselves over the whole land.

Ver. 8. Living waters shall, etc. A lively image of the abundance and preciousness of spiritual blessings, as is evident from analogous Scriptures and from the fact that here the water flows in two opposite directions at once, and that it runs not only in winter, but in summer, when usually in Palestine the streams are altogether dry. These waters come not from occasional rainfalls, but are living, i. e., proceed from perennial fountains, and so cover the whole land from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean with fertility and beauty. They issue from Jerusalem, the central point of the kingdom of God under the Old Testament, and here therefore appropriately standing for the Chris-

tian Church, which is that centre under the New Testament.

Ver. 9. And Jehovah shall be king, etc. Most expositors render "over all the earth," but the connection before and after refers certainly to Palestine, and there seems no reason for departing from the usual rendering; and the less, inasmuch as beyond doubt Canaan here stands as a type of the kingdom of God in its fullest extent in this world. Of course the meaning is that He will be king not only *potentia* or *de jure*, but *actu et de facto*. In this sense He shall be one, i. e., recognized as such; and the same as to his name = outward manifestation of his nature. Not only will gross polytheism come to an end, but also that more refined system which regards all forms of worship as different but equally legitimate modes of worshipping the one Divine Being.

Ver. 10. All the land . . . wine-presses. The whole land is to be leveled to a plain in order that Jerusalem may be elevated, and then the holy city is to be restored to its former grandeur. The article is emphatic in the plain, which in Hebrew always denotes the Arabah or Ghor, the largest and most celebrated of all the plains of Judea, the great valley extending from Lebanon to the farther side of the Dead Sea. Geba was on the northern frontier of Judah (cf. 2 Kings xliii. 8). Rimmon, distinguished from two other Rimmons on the north (Josh. xix. 13; Judg. xx. 45), by the added clause south of Jerusalem, was a city on the border of Edom, given up by Judah to the Simeonites (Josh. xv. 32; xix. 7). In consequence of this depression of all the surrounding country, Jerusalem becomes high. The capital seated on her hills shines conspicuous as the only elevation in a very wide region. Of course the physical elevation thus miraculously caused is only figurative of Jerusalem's spiritual exaltation. An exact parallel is found in the repeated and remarkable prediction of Isaiah (ii. 2) and Micah (iv. 1), in which, however, no leveling takes place, but the temple-mountain is so elevated that it overtops all the mountains of the earth. Professor Cowles connects the plain closely with the two following words so as to get the sense "like the plain from Geba to Rimmon;" but there was no such plain, — the whole territory between these points being hilly in the extreme. The exaltation of Jerusalem is followed by a complete recovery from the ruin brought upon it by the capture and plunder mentioned in vers. 1, 2. The city shall dwell

**לְיוֹרֵךְ** = on its ancient site (cf. xl. 6), and have its old boundaries. These, as they are given here, cannot be determined with certainty. The last clause, From the tower . . . wine-presses (**לְיוֹרֵךְ**)

being supplied before **לְיוֹרֵךְ**, is generally understood to give the extent north and south, the tower of Manasse being at the northeast corner of the city (Neh. iii. 1; xii. 39), and the wine-presses in the royal gardens, at the south side (Neh. iii. 15). As to the former clause, the starting-point is Benjamin's gate, whence some suppose that the line ran eastward to the first gate, i. e., old gate, (Neh. iii. 6), and westward to the corner gate (2 Kings xiv. 13), — the gate of Benjamin being on this supposition in the middle of the northern wall (Hengstenberg, Keil). Others with less probability make the corner gate simply a more precise definition of the place of the first gate (Hitzig, Kliefoth). It is to be hoped that the topographical explorations at present in progress on the site



of Jerusalem will shed such light upon the whole subject as will make plain what now can be only conjecturally determined. Still, whatever may be the precise force of terms here used, the general sense is clear. The city shall have its former limits.

Ver. 11. And they shall dwell . . . secure. Instead of going out either as captives or fugitives, the inhabitants shall dwell securely and have no reason to dread further hostile attacks (Is. lxxv. 19). The ground of this security is the exemption from the curse, the dreadful *ban* which always follows sin (Josh. vi. 18); and the cessation of this implies that the people are a holy nation. This clause is used (Rev. xxi. 3) in the description of the holy city, the new Jerusalem.

(d.) Vers. 12-15. The destruction of the hostile nations. The Prophet here pauses in his account of the blessings destined for the purified Church, to set forth more fully the punishment of the ungodly.

Ver. 12. This will be the plague . . . month.

חֲדָשׁ according to usage always denotes an affliction from the hand of God. The stroke here is the most terrible that can be conceived,—the whole frame rotting away even while the man stands upon his feet, i. e., is alive. To emphasize still more the condition of these living corpses, the Prophet adds the rotting of the eyes which had spied out the nakedness of the city of God, and of the tongue which had blasphemed God and his people. The singular suffixes are of course to be taken distributively.

Ver. 13. A great confusion from Jehovah. Another means of destruction is civil discord. The allusion appears to be to a panic terror causing such confusion that each turns his hand upon the other. Instances occur in Israelitish history, Judg. vii. 22; 1 Sam. xiv. 20 (and behold, every man's sword against his neighbor, and there was a very great confusion) = confusion), 2 Chron. xx. 23. Seize the hand denotes a hostile grasp, and the next clause graphically depicts the effort of the assailant to give a home thrust.

Ver. 14. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem, etc. An old and widely accepted view translates the final words of the first clause, "against Jerusalem" (Targum, Jerome, Kimchi, Luther, Calvin, Cocceius, and most of the moderns). But this is so flatly against the context, that it must be rejected, even though it be admitted that אַחֲרֵי usually points out the object of attack. In

one case at least (Ex. xvii. 8), the preposition has a local sense, and this is true also of Is. xxx. 32, according to Ewald's explanation of the Kethib in that passage. We therefore understand the clause as teaching that Judah = the whole covenant people, will take part in the conflict and carry it on at Jerusalem (LXX., Markins, Hengstenberg, Klefsch, Kell, Köhler). The consequence of this will be the overthrow of the foe and the capture of all their costly possessions. Apparel. As fashions in the East did not and do not change as they do with us, garments of all kinds were kept in great number, and constituted a large part of oriental wealth (Job xxvii. 16, Matt. vi. 19, Jas. v. 2).

Ver. 15. And so . . . the plague of the horse, etc. This verse amplifies the crime and punishment, since it shows the guilt of these foes to be such that even their possessions are overtaken by the divine curse. The case is illustrated by the

example of Achan, whose oxen and sheep and asses were burned, along with himself and his children (Josh. vii. 24).

(e.) Vers. 16-19. The remnant of the heathen shall be converted.

Ver. 16. All that is left . . . tabernacles. The prophet states, with an evident allusion to Is. lxxvi. 23, that those of the heathen who are not destroyed will all go up yearly to the sanctuary of Jehovah to observe one of the great feasts. This, of course, is figurative, as the most intrepid literalist will scarcely maintain that all nations could by any possibility accomplish such a feat. Henderson seeks to avoid the difficulty by supposing that they will go up in the person of their representatives. But even this ingenious device fails to meet the terms used by Isaiah, i. e., where all flesh is said to come every Sabbath and every new moon. The verse is simply a striking method of depicting the entrance of the heathen into the kingdom of God. Why is the feast of tabernacles specified? Not because it occurred in autumn, which is the best season of the year for travelling (Theodoret, Grotius, Rosenmüller); nor because this feast was the holiest and most joyful (Koster, V. Ortenburg, Pressel); nor because of its relation to the ingathering of the harvest (Köhler); nor because such a festival could be observed without any compromise of the principles of the New Dispensation (Henderson); but rather in view of its interesting historical relations (Wachs, C. B. Michaels, Hengstenberg). It was a feast of thanksgiving for the gracious protection afforded by the Lord during the pilgrimage of his people through the desert, and for their introduction into the blessings of the land of Canaan. In like manner the nations will celebrate the goodness which has brought them through their tedious and perilous wanderings in this life to the true and everlasting kingdom of peace and rest. Carrying out this figurative representation, the prophet adds a penalty to be inflicted upon all absentees.

Ver. 17. Whoso of the families . . . no rain. Rain seems to be mentioned as one of the principal blessings of God, that by which the fruitfulness is produced which occasions the joy of the harvest. It therefore appropriately stands here to represent the whole class of providential favors. Compare the notes on x. 1. It shall be withheld from those who fail to fulfill their duties to Him. See a similar threat, upon Israel, in Deut. xi. 16, 17. Pressel calls attention to the fine use of the word *family* in this verse in connection with *Jehovah as king*, indicating that then the various nations of the earth shall be considered as so many families of the one people of God.

Ver. 18. And if the family of Egypt go not up, etc. The menace of the preceding verse is repeated with especial application to Egypt. Many have sought the reason of this particular specification in the natural peculiarities of Egypt, which, being indebted for its fertility not to rain but to the Nile, might seem to be exempt from the threatened drought. But surely, apart from other considerations, this has no force nor application, when it is remembered that even the Nile is dependent upon rains at its source. It is far more natural to attribute the mention of Egypt to its historical relations to Israel as their hereditary foe. The old enemy of the Church shall either join the procession Zionward, or else feel the retributive curse.

Ver. 19. This shall be the sin of Egypt. "This," namely, that no rain falls on them.

Hence many adopt the version of **כְּנָעָנִי** in the English Bible, *punishment* (Targum, Calvin, Henderson), and appeal to Lam. iii. 38, iv. 6, Is. xl. 2. But it is at least doubtful if the word ever has this sense (see on Lam. iv. 6), and accordingly the difficulty is avoided by taking it = *sin*, including its consequences (Hengstenberg, Keil, Köhler). The inseparable connection between sin and punishment is well expressed in Num. xxiii. 23. The foregoing passage does not require us to believe that at the period spoken of there will still be godless heathen who refuse to acknowledge and worship Jehovah. It may be simply a rhetorical enforcement of the thought that all ongodliness will then entirely cease.

(f.) Vers. 20, 21. Jerusalem becomes thoroughly holy.

Ver. 20. There shall be on the bells

altar. **קְלִלָּה**, variously rendered by ancient authorities, is now acknowledged to mean *bells*, which were suspended from horses and mules for the sake of ornament. The phrase inscribed upon these, *Holiness to Jehovah*, is that which was engraved upon the diadem of the high priest (Ex. xxviii. 36). This does not mean that these bells should be employed for religious worship, or used to make sacred vessels (Jewish Critics, Cyril, Grotius); nor that the horses and other means of warfare should be consecrated to the Lord (C. B. Michaelis, Hitzig, Ewald, Maurer); but that the distinction between sacred and profane should cease (Calvin, Hengstenberg, Keil, etc.). Even the smallest outward things, such as have no connection with worship, will be as holy as those which formerly were dedicated by a special consecration to Jehovah. Of course this involves the cessation of the Levitical Economy. An advance upon this thought is contained in the second clause. Not only shall everything profane become holy, but the different degrees of holiness shall cease. The pots used for boiling the sacrificial flesh shall be just as holy as the sacred bowls which received the blood of the placular victims. The two kinds of utensils stood at opposite points of the scale of sanctity; to put them on the same level was to say that all would not only be holy, but *alike* holy. Calvin on this passage elides with ridicule the opinion of Theodore, that the former part of the verse was fulfilled when Helena, the mother of Constantine, adorned the trappings of a horse with a nail of the cross! Such trifling was too much even for Jerome.

Ver. 21. And every pot . . . in that day. Here the thought is carried yet further. Not only shall the temple-pots be equal to sacrificial bowls, but every common pot in the city and throughout the land, will become as sacred as the utensils of the temple, and be freely used by all for sacrificial purposes. The substance of the thought is the same, only more emphatic. This now is repeated in the closing words, — no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah. **כְּנָעָנִי** does not mean a merchant, as in Job xl. 6, Prov. xxxi. 24 (Targum, Aquila, Jerome, Grotius, Bunsen, Hitzig), for there are no indications that traders in Old Testament times frequented the holy courts for traffic; nor literal Canaanites by birth, such as Gibeonites and Nathaiim, who were employed in the lower functions of the temple service (Drusus, V. Hoffman, Kliefoth), for these classes lost none of their former esteem after the restoration; but the term is used as an emblematic designation of godless members of the covenant nation. Canaan was cursed among

Noah's children, and his descendants were under the ban (Deut. vii. 2, xx. 16, 17). To say that these should no more be found in the Lord's house, is simply to say that all its frequenters should be righteous and holy. Professor Cowley says, "Canaanite was the common Hebrew word for trafficker, merchant, — a business in bad repute among the Hebrews because so much associated with fraud and deceit. See Hos. xii. 7, 8." I am quite unwilling to believe that the voice of inspiration put such a stigma upon a necessary and honorable occupation as this explanation implies. Besides, to say that the love of filthy lucre shall no more pollute the sanctuary, is far less than to say that no form of sin of whatever kind shall be found there. Further, such a view is excluded by the obvious analogy between these two closing verses of Zechariah and the statements in the concluding passages of the Apocalypse, where it is plain that universal holiness is promised as the characteristic feature of the kingdom of God in its final consummation.

#### THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL

1. As this chapter is by most sound interpreters admitted to be either as yet wholly unfulfilled, or else an ideal sketch of the experiences of centuries extending from the beginning to the end of the Christian dispensation, there is, of course, considerable vagueness in the view taken of its details. This, however, is no valid objection to its place in the canon. Prophecy was never intended to be simply history written in advance. Had it been such, its own ends would have been defeated. Its obscurity prior to fulfillment is a sure evidence of its genuineness. But the broad outlines which defy literal explanation, yet serve to indicate great principles, to disclose the springs of God's moral government, and to furnish useful hints for the guidance of his people, warning them against undue expectations and yet furnishing a sure basis for a reasonable and holy hope. Pictures of siege, assault, capture, plunder, and exile, as sure to occur in the future, forbid the least intelligent reader from forgetting that he belongs to the Church Militant, or from expecting a calm, steady, peaceful, equable advance of Zion to its destined prevalence over the earth. On the contrary, they show that trials of faith and patience must be encountered; that at times the whole outlook will be dark and discouraging; that Satan, like his angels of old in the case of the demoniacs, will fearfully convulse and rend the body from which he is doomed to be driven out. Such suggestions, therefore, however vaguely they may be expressed, furnish to believers real support in the season when the enemies of the truth seem to triumph, by reminding them that just this entered into God's providential purpose. On the other hand, the same prophecy shows the silver lining of the cloud, shows that the cheek of the true cause is only temporary. The brilliant representations of future and final triumph console and uphold in the greatest "night of afflictions." And believers fall back upon the assurance of the Psalmist, "When the wicked spring as the grass and all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever" (Ps. lxxii. 7).

2. At evening time there shall be light. This has come to be a watchword of the Church. The corresponding proverb of the world, "the darkest hour is just before day," has been questioned, both in its literal and its figurative aspects, and perhaps justly. But there is no question of the truth of

Zechariah's assertion. It is God's way to test the faith and patience of his people, to surround them with difficulties, to hedge up their way on every hand until they see and feel their own helplessness and dependence, and then He interposes in a signal manner. In the great trial of Abraham, when called to offer Isaac for a burnt-offering, the preparations had reached the last point, and the patriarch's arm was uplifted to strike the fatal blow, when the voice from heaven stayed his hand, and the believer gratefully exclaimed, "Jehovah Jireh — The Lord will provide." The experience of Abraham's descendants in Egypt led to the proverbial saying which the Rabbins have preserved for us, "When the straw fails, then comes Moses," or as the modern phrase is, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." When Lazarus was sick our Lord was informed of the fact in ample time to proceed to his bedside and arrest the disease, as He had often done in other cases, but He deliberately remained away on the other side of Jordan, and came to Bethany only when the grave had held its victim for days. This was not through coldness or carelessness, but, as He said, for the glory of God (John xi. 4, 40), in order that a miracle so transcendent might confirm the faith of his disciples and intensify yet more the love and joy of the sisters in their brother whom they received back from the tomb. And so in all cases, whether of individuals or communities, faith is sustained by the assurance that a day of elonds and gloom cannot last forever, that a change will occur just so soon as the purposes of the visitation are accomplished, and that it will come just when, according to the natural course of things, a starless night is about to set in. Earnest prayer was made by the Church for the imprisoned Peter (Acts xii. 5), but it was not until the very night before the day appointed for his execution that the angel of the Lord delivered him from his guards and fetters.

3. Water is a natural image of spiritual blessings, and especially of the chiefest of them all, — the influences of the Holy Spirit. The Psalmist speaks of a river whose streams make glad the city of God (xlv. 4); Joel declares a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim (iii. 18); Isaiah promises, "I will pour floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (xlv. 3); but Ezekiel (xvii. 1-12) furnishes a most striking parallel to Zechariah's prediction. He saw water issuing from under the sanctuary, an ever widening, deepening stream, which swept through the desert bearing fertility in its course, until it reached the Sea of Sodom, the standing symbol of desolation and death, and healed its stagnant waters, filling them with animal life and covering its banks with trees whose fruit was food and their leaves medicine. Our prophet sees living streams which issue in different directions from Jerusalem, and reach to either sea, east and west; and as they flow without intermission, winter and summer, they make the land a terrestrial Paradise with undying verdure and perpetual abundance. No one of these figurative descriptions, however large and varied, is overwrought or extravagant. They rather fall short of the reality. The blessed Spirit is the author of all the holiness in the world. He indeed uses means. The prophets put Him in close connection with Jerusalem and the Temple. But the means depend upon Him, just as the best appointed ship makes no progress without a breeze. The Apostles were not allowed to engage in their work until the Spirit was

poured out from on high, but when the effusion was felt, the feeblest of them spake as with a tongue of fire. The grand feature of the latter day is copious and continuous effusions of such grace, — no longer intermittent, or scanty, or of small extent, but radiating in all directions at once, permanently filling every channel, and limited only by the wants of the race. Wherever these living streams reach, the barren soil of nature is fertilized and the dead live again. Quickly but surely, with the same noiseless energy with which the great providential forces work, these spiritual agencies perform their office of reconstructing human society and changing the face of the world.

4. The consequence of such streams of blessing is a degree of consecration never seen before. The form in which the universal prevalence of holiness is expressed, is noteworthy. Men are not to become monks or anchorites, the ordinary conditions of human life are not to be reversed; but on the contrary the infusion of grace will be so large and general that every rank and class will feel it, and its effects will be seen in all the relations of life, purifying and elevating without opturning or destroying. In business, in recreation, in politics, in art, in literature, in social life, in the domestic circle, there will be a distinct and cordial recognition of the claims of God and of the supremacy of his law. There will be no divorce anywhere, between religion and morality, no demand that any department of human activity shall be deuced beyond the domain of conscience. When even the bells on the horses bear the same sacred inscription which once flashed from the diadem of the High Priest, nothing can be found too small or too familiar to be consecrated to the Lord. The religious spirit will prevail everywhere, securing justice, truth, kindness, and courtesy among men; doing away with wars, contentions, jealousies, and competitions; hallowing trades and handicrafts; softening the inevitable contrasts of ranks, gifts, and conditions; binding men to one another by their devotion to a common master in heaven; and thus introducing the true city of God on earth for which all saints long with an ever increasing desire. The idea of such a commonwealth originated in the Scriptures, and it can be realized only in the way they point out. All schemes of political, social, or even moral reform, apart from the principles of the Word, are the merest chimeras. They are impossible of accomplishment, and if accomplished, would disappoint their projectors. True religion, restoring the Lord to his rightful place in human thought and action, alone furnishes the sanction, the authority, and the power by which men become what they ought to be to themselves, to each other, and to the community. The last Canaanite will perish from the earth, and the people shall be all righteous, when the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

#### HOMEILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

BRADLEY: Vera. 6, 7. I. Mixed condition of the righteous in this world; in respect to their knowledge, their outward circumstances, their inward comforts, their wavering holiness. II. God's wisdom in allowing it; to subdue their corruptions, to exercise their graces, to bring them to dependence on Himself. III. Our consolation under it; God notices it, the mixed events work together for good, the scene is short. IV. The happy termination of all; in a state of unmingled good, in an

unexpected hour. Finally, Are we the people concerned in it?

**HENRYSHURRO:** Vers. 11. *Curses.* All the dreadful things that can possibly be thought of are included in this one word.

**CALVIN:** Ver. 12. The habitation of the godly is secure, not because they dread no attacks of foes, but because they firmly believe that they will be preserved by a power from above, even though the devil excites the peoples on all sides to contrive their ruin.

**PATRON:** Vers. 20, 21. I. All common duties will be performed as seriously as solemn worship. II. Every building will be a house of God. III. Every day will be like a Sabbath. IV. Every meal will be what the Lord's Supper is now. V. Yet the distinctions which now prevail will be observed. VI. There will be no insincere worshippers. Infer (1.) How wretchedly we now live. (2.) See whether we have any religion or not. (3.) Learn what pursuits and pleasures are pleasing to God.



